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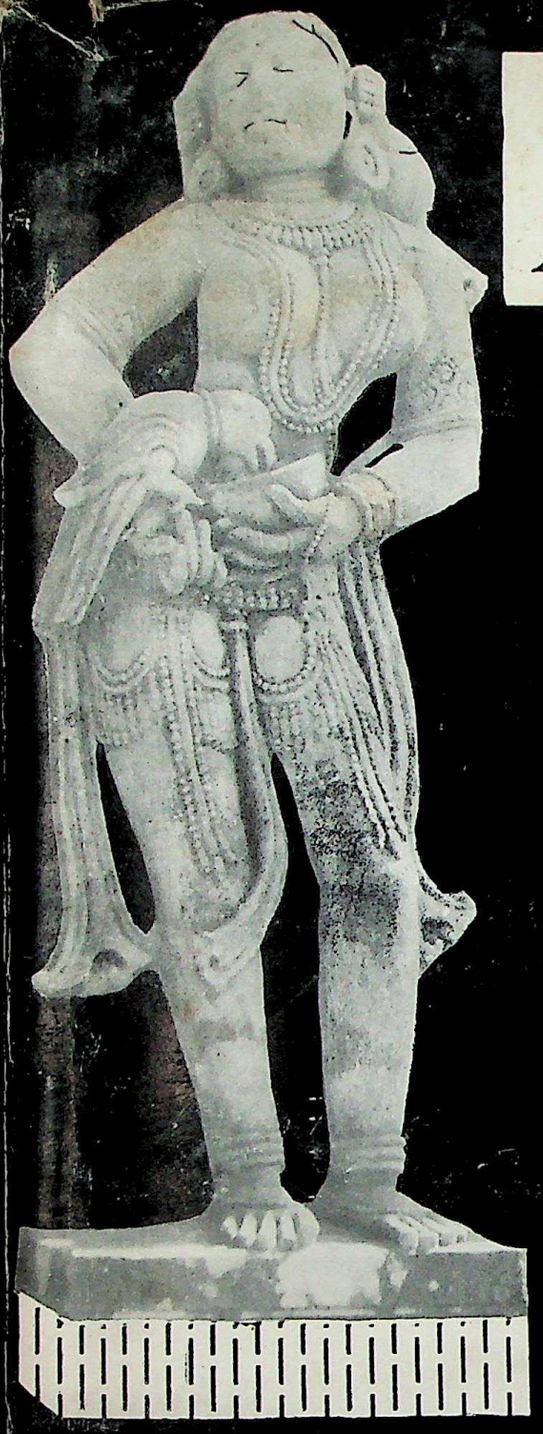

MĀRKAṆḌĪ TEMPLES

S.B. DEO

NAGPUR UNIVERSITY, NAGPUR

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MĀRKAṆḌĪ TEMPLES

By

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Culture and Archaeology,
Nagpur University.

NAGPUR : 1973

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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write a Foreword to this monograph on Markandi Temples. During the last six years the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology has carried out extensive archaeological explorations and excavations as also completed architectural and sculptural documentation of the temples in the Vidarbha region. Besides publishing the reports of all the excavations, the Department has already brought out two monographs on the temples of this region.

The present monograph on the Markandi Temples, which is the third in the series, tries to document the architectural, sculptural and iconographical wealth of the Markandi group of temples. It is hoped that this monograph will meet approbation in the world of scholars, art historians and connoisseurs.

P. S. Mene
Vice-Chancellor

Nagpur University
Nagpur.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This monograph dealing with the art and architecture of the temples at Markaṇḍī, Chāndā District, Mahārāshṭra State, happens to be the second publication in the series entitled "The Temples of the Vidarbha Region" undertaken by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology of the University of Nagpur.

I am indebted to Dr. V. B. KOLTE, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, and Dr. P. S. MENE, the present Vice-Chancellor of the Nagpur University, for the financial and academic patronage to this project, but for which, the completion and printing of this monograph could not have been possible.

The Mārkaṇḍī Temples are Centrally protected monuments. I am beholden to the Archaeological Survey of India for permission to photograph the monuments for this study.

I am also grateful to my colleagues in the Department, Dr. A. P. JAMKHEDKAR and Dr. G. B. DEGLURKAR, for their help, discussion and suggestions.

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Nagpur
1973

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I INTRODUCTION

The group of temples at Mārkaṇḍī or Mārkaṇḍa Deva in Chāndā District of Mahārāshṭra, though rather isolated and not much attended too, are renowned creations which can justifiably claim artistic ancestry of the Khajuraho School. Of the several temples, only a couple of them are now in a tolerably good condition. However, even these are good enough to give a glimpse of their artistic wealth. The place is now rarely visited, except at the *Mahāśivarātrī* fair, as it does not lie on the main route, and even now it is not well connected by road which accounts for its relative isolation.

With a view to acquaint the world of scholars, art connoisseurs and the laymen alike, it was thought that these temples would deserve a priority over others, as they certainly stand as an embodiment of the finest traditions of sculptural and architectural art of ancient Vidarbha and for that matter, of Mahārāshṭra. The Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, therefore, thought it fit to begin with the Mārkaṇḍī temples in a scheme envisaging, in due course, a systematic study of the Temples of Vidarbha.

The present study was spread over two seasons. As far as possible, most of the details are incorporated in the present study as the following pages would show. However, the state of preservation of these temples, their constant and hybrid renovations and the relative inaccessibility of some parts of these proved a serious handicap. Within these limits, the following pages try to bring out the artistic beauty of these temples. The monograph is essentially introductory and prepared with a view to be useful to all those who would care to visit the place, scholars and laymen alike.

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II LOCATION

Mārkaṇḍī or Mārkaṇḍa Deva lies about 216 kilometres SSE of Nagpur (Fig. 1). One has to go via Chandrapūr, Mūl and Bhaṇḍārā and cross the river Wainagaṅgā twice with the help of improvised plank bridges. It is almost impossible to go to Mārkaṇḍā in the rainy season when the river is in spate.

Mārkaṇḍī, Mārkaṇḍā or Mārkaṇḍa Deva is a small village situated on the left bank of the perennial river Wainagaṅgā. The settlement is rather small, inasmuch as it contains about a 1000 people. The entire area is dead flat so that the village and the group of temples can easily be located from a distance. Except for the temples, there is nothing else of note in the locality, though a few kilometres to the SW could be detected a few Megalithic Stone Circles.

The temples proper are situated on the eastern periphery of the village and are protected monuments. Close to the north of these monuments is the recently built Dharmaśālā of Shri Gāḍge Mahārāj with fairly good stepped *ghāṭ* leading down to the river (Pl. I, 1 and 2).

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III THE NOMENCLATURE

The local people call the place as Mārkaṇḍī or Mārkaṇḍa Deva, and assign two of the major temples in the group to Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi and his father Mṛikuṇḍa (locally pronounced as Murkuṇḍa Ṛiṣi). It is not explained how both these sages got associated with this place. It is likely that the place, situated as it is on the bank of the perennial and holy river, Wainagaṅgā, has acquired sanctity over the years.

The sage Mṛikuṇḍa, to whom one of the temples in the group is dedicated (which lies just at the rear of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi temple), has been referred to in the *Bhāgavata–*, *Vāyu–*, *Brahmāṇḍa–* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇas*. Some of these refer to him also as Mṛikaṇḍu. The sage was the son of Dhātṛi, one of the Ādityas, from Ayati, the daughter of Meru. Mṛikaṇḍa is stated to have practised penance for a very long period at the Śāligrāma-tīrtha.

The Purāṇas also refer to Mārkaṇḍa and Mārkaṇḍeya, two different sages whose stories are different. Of the two, the latter is stated to be the son of Mṛikaṇḍa referred to above. Mārkaṇḍeya has been referred to in several of the Purāṇas. It is stated that he was very famous and was long-lived. He is the composer of one of the Purāṇas and has been associated with the Pāṇḍava story in the Mahābhārata. He is stated to have practised severe penance which won him the favour of Śiva. He is credited with the compilation of *Mārkaṇḍeya Smṛiti*, *Mārkaṇḍeya Saṁhitā* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Stotra*, the latter eugolising Śiva. He is also supposed to have written the *Mārkaṇḍeya–* and the *Varāha Purāṇas*.

There is also another Mārkaṇḍeya who is associated with the Rāma story as referred to in the *Vālmīkī Rāmāyaṇa*. Inspite of the association of these two sages with the nomenclature of the place and two temples therein, there is hardly any other evidence to corroborate or supplement this association. It may, however, be mentioned that the temples in this group, in a large majority, contain the Śiva-Liṅgas which essentially prove the Śaiva association of the temples. It has already been mentioned above that Mārkaṇḍeya was blessed by Śiva at the end of his long penance. The puranic account and the religious association of these temples are at one only to the extent that both imply strong Śaiva leanings. Even the sculptures, as will be discussed later, are predominantly Śaivite depicting various forms of Śiva and the goddesses of the Śaiva pantheon. The Śiva element, even in the syncretistic icons, is, if one may say so, over-emphasised.

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IV THE SITE

As mentioned earlier, the site is now protected by the Archaeological Survey of India. At present the site accommodates eighteen temples. It is difficult to designate everything that remains here as a temple for, save a few, some others are mere remains of squarish basement platforms over which stray sculptures have now been dumped. Some others are extremely hybrid renovations, while some contain icons which have no relation to the nomenclature of the temple.

The site was tried to be conserved as early as 1909 when "conservation of the site was taken up and better sculptures were accommodated in a long low building called the Daśāvatāra temple."[1] A couple of years later further repairs were carried out. Even then the group of temples does not seem to have attained its original elegance as the damage caused by lightening "some two hundred years ago"[2] was apparently extensive.

CUNNINGHAM[3] first noticed this group of temples. They were then 24 according to his observation. However, COUSENS mentions[4] only twenty three, and states that "the temples stand on a high buff overlooking the river.....the principal temple takes its name from Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi but is dedicated to Śiva. The group of temples comprises a monastery and is enclosed in a quadrangle, 196 ft. by 118 ft. ..... (there are) entrances from three sides, while along the rear side seems to be a row of cells facing the Wen Ganga." He further opines that the buildings are early but the carvings are late.

By 1924–25, there seems to have been further decadence, for the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the year mentions that the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple "formed the central feature of a picturesque group of about 20 shrines all enclosed within a quadrangle..... They are of different sizes and in various stages of preservation but all are sculptured in greater or less degree."

At present, save four temples, *viz.*– Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi; Yamadharma; Mṛikaṇḍa Ṛiṣi and Śaṅkara temple (Fig. No. 1, Temple Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 10 respectively), – all the rest are in a sad state of preservation. The main temple, i. e. Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi temple, which was hit by lightening was somehow repaired in late historical times. COUSENS writing in 1897 ASI Report, comments that "120 years ago, the roof of the

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maṇḍapa was repaired by Gond Rajas.....whose architect introduced huge piers with radiating arches inside the principal room."

REFERENCES :

1. *AR, ASI*, 1924-25, p. 33.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 32
3. *ASI*, Vol. IX, Report of the Tour in the Central Provinces in 1873-74 and 1874-75, pp. 142 ff.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

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V THE TEMPLES

As pointed out earlier, the exact number of the temples here has been a matter of uncertainty. They seem to range between 24 and 20. But on actual survey of the present group, the number does not seem to go beyond 18. Some of these eighteen are also such as can hardly be termed as shrines as several of these are now preserved – as for instance Nos. 11 and 18 (Fig. 1)–, simply as pedestals without any superstructure.

Similar is the case with the nomenclature of the different shrines. For instance, COUSENS states[1] that Nos. 8 and 10 to 22 are all dedicated to Śiva *Liṅgas*. He does not refer to any one of these by name. Number 4, in his account, has been referred as Temple of Jodh (?) Liṅga, and No. 9 as the Śiva Liṅga designated as Rājarājeśvara. In the case of the latter he could not find any trace of the temple as such.

Checking up the information given by COUSENS from the local informant, it was found that the two Śiva *liṅgas* mentioned above cannot be traced now. The local informant was ignorant about the existence of Jodh Liṅga as also about Rājarājeśvara. It is apparent, therefore, that lot of additions, alterations and supplementations have been done in the present day complex of the temples at Mārkaṇḍī.

With this apparent limitation, the following account of the extant temples may be evaluated.

(1) *Temple of Mārkaṇḍeśvara or Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi* (Fig. 1, No. 1; Fig. 2) :

This is the principal temple of the entire group, and stands a little towards the north in the complex. This is also the largest, the most elaborate and the most ornamented. The sculptural wealth at Mārkaṇḍī is almost entirely associated with this temple, in contrast to all the others which are plain and simple on plan. The sculptures, the mouldings and the intricate tracery on the curvilinear *śikhara* are the outstanding features of this temple.

The Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India for 1924–25 thus describes this temple[2] :

> ".....spire and maṇḍapa missing. Yet a stately structure with its dominant horizontal bands,[3] continuous around the śikhara, base and maṇḍapa walls, relieved with a lighter treatment of vertical panelling in shallow facets

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embellished with little groups of figures,[4] principally of Śiva and Pārvatī..... The vertical facets of the Śikhara are progressively recessed to form a diagonal plan in which the central projections dominate, carrying their vertical lines to the top of the tower. Banded facets of undercut mouldings alternate with flat lace-like surfaces as they ascend the śikhara,[5] affording a light contrast to the banded base while sustaining its horizontal harmony. Originally at each corner of the square-planned maṇḍapa, a subsidiary pyramidal roof[6] rose to group with the main pyramid that surmounted the centre. But all these pyramids except that at one corner have now disappeared. A columned porch originally projected from each of the three sides[7] of the maṇḍapa (gave) access to the interior; only the carved and sculptured doorways behind them, however, now remain."

Because of constant repairs and renovations, all the above features cannot now be discerned. However, much has remained to give us a fairly good idea as to how the original temple could have been.

The temple faces the east and has two additional entrances, one to the north and the other to the south in the form of lateral *maṇḍapas* whose plinths have remained (Fig. 2). As such, the temple seems to have three projections, all the three forming *maṇḍapas* or columned porches giving access from the east, north and south, to the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* of the temple. Taking into consideration these lateral projections, the temple appears to be cruciform on plan.

The *maṇḍapas*, of which only the plinths and inner doorways are now visible, gave access to the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* the *śikhara* of which is completely lost, capped as it is now with a flat roof with an iron grill admitting light in the interior. Right in the centre of the *maṇḍapa* is a square *raṅga śilā* with a flight of steps at the centre of each side. At each corner of this square platform are partly improvised pillars some of which contain fragmentary sculptures pinned in at the time of renovation.[8] These support the flat roof above and hold in position the grill admitting light in the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*.

It has been mentioned earlier that this portion was renovated by the Gond kings "whose architect introduced huge piers with radiating arches inside the principal room." The radiating arches executed with the help of rubble masonry, lot of chunam and even fragmentary sculptures, look thoroughly incongruous with the original bearing of the temple. The niches (Fig. 2) and even the walls of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* are studded with sculptures pinned in at random.

The *śikhara* of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* appears to have been executed originally with concentric diminishing rings, from the centre of the topmost ring of which possibly hung a pendent.

The *sabhāmaṇḍapa* gives access to the *antarāla* which is roughly rectangular with indented corners. In the lateral walls of the *antarāla*, several stray sculptures have been fixed, some of which are not only late but have no bearing whatsoever with the shrine which contains the Śiva *liṅga*.

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A flight of steps leads one down in the cella whose ground level is lower than that of the *antarāla* and the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*. The sanctum is also practically of the same plan as that of the *antarāla*, but less horizontally elongated, i. e. more squarish. It contains the Śiva-*liṅga*, now termed Mārkaṇḍeśvara.

As stated earlier, the *śikharas* of the main sanctum and of the *maṇḍapas* are in a ruined state. However, as noted previously, "originally at each corner of the square-planned *maṇḍapa*, a subsidiary pyramidal roof rose to group with the main pyramid that surmounted the centre." One such pyramidal roof can be seen in Pl. VI (also Pl. III, 2). This consists of diminishing square tiers (*pīṭha*) one above the other,[9] capped by a massive *āmalaka*, the finial over which is missing. When extant, these stumpy pyramidal *śikharas* on the *maṇḍapa* must have contributed to emphasising the upward thrust of the main *śikhara* over the cella.

Unfortunately the *śikhara* over the sanctum is also in ruins (Pl. III, 1; IV, 1) and a major part of it is renovated. However, whatever has remained, gives some idea of the original *śikhara*. In contrast to the stumpy pyramidal *śikharas* of the four *maṇḍapas*, the main *śikhara* seems to have been curvilinear (Pl. IX), the cardinal faces of which were embellished by intricate and yet delightful tracery (Pl. IV, 1), and progressively recessed vertical facets. These must have been capped finally by a massive *āmalaka* crowned by a *stūpikā*. Though the central projections with tracery dominated cardinally, as at Khajuraho, the corners were ornamented with small panels of figure sculptures and vertically repeated trefoil or *triparṇī* motif. In addition, miniature *śikharas* seem to have played their part in the decorative order (Pl. IX). However, these do not seem to have been repeated so as to enhance the height (*utsedha*) of the main spire. They remain stuck up at the four corners of the main *śikhara*. The marvellous effect attained in the spires of the Khajuraho group of temples, especially Kandariyā-Mahādeva temple,[10] by the repetition of the motif of miniature *śikharas* (*ūrusṛiṅga*) is lacking here.

The eastern face of the *śikhara* of the Mārkaṇḍa Deva temple is embellished by *śukanāsā* with intricate carving combined with human and animal motifs which relieve the geometrical jugglery dominating the rhythmically receding tiers capped ultimately by a trefoil decoration having centrally a circular panel with human head. The geometrical tracery is also relieved by leaf (*parṇa*) motif and small panels of flying *gandharvas*. On the lateral projections, monkeys in playful postures are depicted, whereas on the upper course motifs of standing lions add to the elegance of the entire set up.

The basal frieze of decoration on the *śukanāsā* comprises battle scenes in which elephant riders and cavalrymen are depicted in full gusto (Pl. LIII). This frieze is set in between two projecting mouldings and it runs all along the base of the *śukanāsā*. The latter is further decorated by short sculptural panels, the central one being that of *Umā-Maheśvara* (Pl. IX), flanked on either sides by panels depicting *apsarās* in different dancing postures (Pl. XXXIX, Nos. 1 and 2), mother-and-child and a lady hunting a

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boar. As the temple is dedicated to Śiva, the central panel also depicts the same deity. Further up, the *śukanāsā* is decorated by a frieze of geese, half of those to the left facing left, and half on the right facing right. This is capped by a frieze of floral decoration and further up by festoons. As noted earlier, the motif of miniature *śikhara* is at either corner of the *śukanāsā*.

The most delightful portion of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple is the *jaṅghā* which is embellished by three bands or registers of sculptures, numbering 409, depicting a bewildering array of different forms of Śiva, the *Dikpālas*, *Apsarās*, a few erotic sculptures and a wide variety of *vyālas* or *śārdūlas* (Pl. VI, VII and VIII), as also *tāpasas*. Some of the icons of gods are in projected niches with borders, whereas the *vyālas* are invariably set in recesses. The *mithunas* and the *apsarās* are on projections. This feature is also present in the Khajuraho group of temples.[11]

The *adhiṣṭhāna* or the basement of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple has two noteworthy features. First is that it has numerous mouldings (Fig. 4, Nos. 1, 4), the basal corners appearing like *taraṅgas* (Pl. V, 1). The mouldings are rhythmically indented, some of these falling in the categories of *kaṇi* and roll mouldings. Some again are decorated with scrolls, whereas some with horizontal floral or diamond freize, the vertical projected bands having, however, a pile of *caitya* arch motif. All these basement decorations recall to mind those on the Kandariyā Mahādeva temple at Khajuraho.[12] Parts of the basement moulding also contain the *kīrtimukha* frieze (Pl. V, 2). Another feature to be noted pertains to the slantingly placed figures of *apsarās* standing languidly below a mango tree heavily laden with bunch of mangoes (Pl. V, 2 and 3). These figures, several of them now missing, are found to have been placed in between two projections over the mouldings of the basement. The sockets of these projections, the lower one being squarish and the upper one with the motif of a *śārdūla*, accommodated the tenons provided at the upper and lower ends of the slab over which the female figure was sculpted. Such figures, however, seem to have been fixed only on the northern and southern faces of the basement. The eastern and the western faces do not have them. The geometrical decorations running all along the mouldings provide a charming background to these *śālabhañjikās* who at once appear to emerge out of the diaper background.

The temple does not appear to have a platform (*jagatī*). It is quite likely that it is not open to view as a large area around the temple is covered now with squarish thick bricks cemented in mud mortar. The other smaller temples adjacent to the Mārkaṇḍa, have rectangular platforms over which the temples stand.

2. *Nandikeśvara Temple or Nandī Pavilion* :

Just in front of the eastern face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple is the Nandikeśvara or Nandī pavilion (Fig. 1, No. 2). It is not a separate temple as such, but a part or an appendage to the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple which faces east and enshrines a *śiva-liṅga*.

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The pavilion is an open structure now, with the roof missing, facing west (Fig. 2). The eastern side is somewhat ruined and hence renovated. The pavilion, roughly square on plan, with two lateral projections, bore possibly a pyramidal roof supported by pillars (Pl. I, 2), which are relatively plain, having a heavy square base, the middle part decorated by a square moulding bearing floral decoration and with the capital having a series of triple roll mouldings. The pillars (Fig. 4 , No. 3) rested on the *jaṅghā* of the pavilion. The pavilion now contains a couple of *nandīs* which appear to have been placed there later. These are placed on a higher level which can be negotiated by means of a flight of steps on the western side.

3. *Yamadharma Temple* :

Based on a platform of rubble masonry admeasuring 16′ in length (EW) and 10′ in breadth, this temple (Fig. 1, No. 3; Pl. II, No. 2), close to the north of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, is a small and modest construction. In relation to its basal proportions, the *śikhara* appears too much vertically elongated, emphasising the sense of slender height rather than mass.

The temple is rectangular on plan with cardinally moulded projections, one each to the east, north and south (Fig. 3). The cella, which is squarish, has its level lower than that of the small *āntarāla* in front. One has to negotiate ones way down to the level of the cella which enshrines a Śiva-*liṅga* with squarish *pīṭha* with rounded corners.

The portico in front, which opens to west, is small and narrow with lateral niches. The facade of the temple contains two pilasters somewhat plain with partly fluted body and *pūrṇaghaṭa* at both ends (Pl. II, 2).

The doorway of the cella is profusely decorated (Pl. IV, 2) and has numerous *śākhās* bearing floral and *vyāla* friezes, *Gaṇeśa* in the centre of the lintel and a highly embellished pilaster on either side in relief. The pilaster has a square base with *triparṇa* decoration, capped by an octagonal member. The central portion bears a square nitched panel containing the *kīrtimukha* motif in good relief. The upper part again bears beadings, roll and *kaṇi* mouldings.

The basal slab bears, in the centre, diamond decoration in good relief, flanked on either side by female figure, with the extreme ends depicting the motif of an elephant being attacked by a *śārdūla*. The lower regions of the doorframe are embellished by Gaṅgā and Yamunā (Pl. XXX, 4) to left and right respectively. Both these river goddesses hold a *ghaṭa* in their left hand and a flywhisk in their right and are identified as such by their *vāhanas*, the crocodile (*makara*) and the tortoise (*kūrma*), shown just near the left leg. Over their head is shown the *nāga-rājā* with folded hands.

On the side facing the entrance, just to the right of the river goddesses, are carved, in bold relief, syncretistic icons of Śiva-Bhairava and Hari (Pl. XXX, No. 3). The figure is bearded, with mustache, and has a terrible look because of large eyes and

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teeth. It holds in upper right hand a *carka* and the lower right holds *kapāla*; the upper left hand holds a *khaṭvāṅga* and the lower left rests on the *gadā* with *kīrtimūkha* motif. The figure is profusely ornamented and is flanked by a female figure supporting a *ghaṭa* in her hand.

Similar syncretistic icons are carved on the left base of the doorframe (Pl. IV, No. 2). Here, however, the form is of Hari-Hara with the right hands holding *triśūla* and *gadā* and the left ones, a *sarpa* and the *mātuliṅga* fruit.

The upper part of the doorframe has multiple mouldings in projection, small panels and female figures – the central one showing Śiva-Pārvatī –, and a series of miniature *śikhara* replicas.

The exterior of the temple is severely plain. The *śikhara* is achieved by piling up horizontal bands one above the other and receding vertically to be capped ultimately by the *kalaśa*. Though the horizontal bands dominate, vertical lines of the indentations are carved right upto the end of the *śikhara* which relieve the monotomy of horizontality and emphasise the vertical linear thrust of the *śikhara*.

The portico is covered by the *śukanāsā* on the western facade and is embellished by floral panels at the base and friezes of intricate tracery, the piles of which gradually taper upward, finally capped by the *triparṇa* motif (*see* also, Pl. II, 3). The delicately carved facade of the *śukanāsā* provides a delightful contrast to the severely plain bands of the *śikhara*.

The three walls of the temple contain plain mouldings all along the base. However, all the three walls have a central niche. The south wall has the *Andhakāsuravadhamūrti* of Śiva, the eastern one has a badly damaged icon of Sūrya while that on the north contains the figure of Cāmuṇḍā.

4. *Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple* :

This is the second largest temple of the group and is situated to the north-west of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple (Fig. 1, No 4). The temple faces the east.

This shrine is dedicated to Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi who is, as mentioned earlier, supposed to be the father of Mārkaṇḍeya whose name the main temple bears. Even though dedicated to Mṛikuṇḍa, the temple contains a Śiva-*liṅga*.

The temple has three parts, the cella or *garbhagṛha*, ante-chamber or *antarāla* and a hall or *sabhāmaṇḍapa* with a square *raṅga-śilā*.

The cella is square on plan and the features of the mouldings and other decorations on the wall exteriors as well as those of the lofty *śikhara* are similar to those mentioned in connection with the Yamadharma temple.

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The exterior of the walls of the cella have three niches, one each on the north, the west and the south; these contain respectively the icon of Cāmuṇḍā (Pl. XIX, 2), Sūrya and *Gajāsuravadhamūrti*.

The cella has a beautifully carved doorframe with multiple *śākhās* bearing decorations similar to those noted in the Yamadharma temple. Practically all the decorative and iconographical features are repeated here exactly like those on the doorframe of the Yamadharma temple.

The lateral niches of the *antarāla* contain Śiva-Pārvatī (in the left) and seated Gaṇeśa (in the right). The pilasters or *ardhastambhas* of the *antarāla* are massive and plain with very crudely depicted *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif.

The *sabhāmaṇḍapa* measures 27′–6″ × 25′ and is two-thirds open, with the walls built only half-way up (Pl. X, 2). The pillars at the four corners of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* are with heavy square base, partly fluted shaft, roll moulding at the upper end with plain capital which supports the plain brackets above.

However, the most noteworthy feature of the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*, is the *raṅga-śilā* with lavishly decorated pillars at the four corners. These pillars support the roof above. Unfortunately the roof has been very badly renovated.

All the four pillars are similar in conception, save a little variation in the basal sculptures. The pillars (Pl. X, 2) have a moulded base of triple mouldings, the central one being of *kaṇi* type. On each face of the triple moulding is a square panel with diamond motif. Above this is the square shaft each face of which has a bordered panel depicting dancing female figures, or icons like that of Brahmā, Bhairava, Sarasvatī, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, Veṇugopāla, etc. Above this comes the cylindrical portioṇ of the shaft covered by octagonal and polygonal mouldings overlain by small decorative panels with floral, diamond and geometrical designs. The top of the cylindrical shaft is capped by a square member the four faces of which project, and over each of which is an elaborate motif of a *kīrtimukha*. Over this square member come all other mouldings like the *kaṇi* and *cyma recta* ornamented cardinally by pyramidal panels with trefoil tracery. The capital is in the form of a squat lotus overlain by a banded member which supports the square bracket above. These pillars are the finest specimens of decoration in the entire complex of temples at Mārkaṇḍī.

5. *Viṭṭhala–Rukmiṇī Temple* :

This is a small shrine facing east and situated close to the north-east of Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣī temple (Fig. 1, No. 5). The plan of the temple has no distinctive feature; it may be taken to be a dimunitive Yamadharma temple plan. The *śikhara* over the cella and that on the *antarāla* are after the same fashion as noted in the case of Yamadharma.

As is the case with the temples No. 4 and 5, this temple has also niches centrally on the exterior of the wall or the *jaṅghā* of the cella. The southern facade contains the

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icon of dancing Gaṇeśa, the western one that of Sūrya and the northern one has dancing Bhairava.

Though named as the temple of Viṭṭhala-Rakhumāī, the cella contains a very late and crude icon of Sūrya. The door frame of the cella bears the image of Gaṇeśa on the lintel, and the *śākhās* and other features are similar to those on the doorframe of the Yamadharma Temple.

6. *Mṛityuñjaya Temple* :

Close to the north of No. 5 and first in front of the Yamadharma Temple, is the shrine designated as Mṛityuñjaya Temple facing east and containing a Śiva-*liṅga*. Though bigger in proportion, its plan resembles that of No. 5 described above. It has the maximum length of 18′–6″ and breadth of 10′.

The plan shows two components, *viz.*, the cella and the *antarāla* or open corridor. The *śikhara* has been extensively renovated and hence it is not possible to know its original nature. It would not be illogical to hold, however, that the *śikhara* could have been like the one over the Yamadharma Temple.

The entrance to the corridor or *antarāla* is embellished by tripple *śākhās* depicting human figures and circular panels with bird and human figures. The lintel has in the central panel the figure of a *devī*.

The cella is also completely renovated. It contains an image of Śiva-Pārvatī in the niche of the back-wall facing the entrance. The doorframe of the cella has seated Gaṇeśa panel in the centre of the lintel. A pendant lotus decorates the ceiling of the corridor. The niches of the corridor contain crude images of Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa which appear to be late and deposited there in later times.

7. *Umā-Śaṅkara Temple* :

At the rear of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and to the south of Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple is situated the Umā-Śaṅkara Temple (Fig. 1, No. 7). It is similar in plan to the Viṭṭhala-Rukmiṇī (or Rakhumāī) Temple.

No feature of the temple deserves any special notice. The walls of the cella have niches on the exterior. The one on the north facade contains the figure of Cāmuṇḍā; that on west, has the figure of Sūrya and the southern wall-face niche contains the *Andhākāsuravadhamūrtī* of Śiva (Pl. XVI, No. 1).

8. *Daśāvatāra Temple* :

This is placed against the western wall of the enclosure which seals off the western border of the entire temple complex (Fig. 1, No. 8).

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It is nothing short of an open cloister measuring 75′ in length and 7′ wide. The back wall is compartmented into 12 shallow rectangular niches by means of pilasters. Every niche has a pedestal meant to support the sculpture placed above.

The front portion is closed by means of a half wall (Pl. II, No. 1) over which massive half pillars with square base, partly fluted shaft and roll capital, stand to support the squarish bracket holding the horizontal beam of the architrave above.

Every compartment of the cloister is crowned by a pyramidal *śikhara* capped by an *āmalaka* (Fig. 4, No. 5). These are reminiscent of the Chausaṭh Yoginī temple at Khajuraho[13]. The temple is negotiated by means of two entrances, one each at the southern and northern ends.

The nomenclature of the temple implies that icons of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu were intended to be accommodated in the temple, one each in the ten compartments. However, there are twelve compartments. At present, besides containing some of the depictions of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, the cloister is used for dumping stray sculptures and unrelated fragmentary pieces. The range of images now accommodated here comprises those of Buddha, Kṛiṣṇa, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Nṛisiṁha, Bhūvarāha, Kūrma as also Gaṇeśa, Nagna-Bhairava, Mahiṣāsuramardinī and a few secular sculptures depicting domestic scenes. A number of decorative fragments[14] (Pl. II, No. 3) have also been deposited.

9. *Śakti Devī Temple* :

This is a very small structure which does not require special notice. The temple, built of the remains of other structures, faces the east (Fig. 1, No. 9) with an open platform to its north. The latter is now used for depositing fragmentary sculptures, whereas the temple proper has a stumpy pyramidal *śikhara* built of chunam and contains an image of *Mahiṣāsuramardinī.*

10. *Śaṅkara Temple* :

In proportions, this is the second largest temple in the group and lies close to the south-west of the main temple, i. e. Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple (Fig. 1, No. 10).

On plan, it combines the features of Yamadharma (No. 3) and Mṛīkuṇḍa Ṛiṣi (No. 4) temples. However, the temple parts have been renovated on a large scale. The extant *śikhara*, the doorframe of the cella and the exteriors of the walls of the cella bear the same features as of Yamadharma and Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi temples. The panels on the north, west and south facades bear highly worn out images of Cāmuṇḍā, Sūrya and *Gajāsuravadhamūrtī* of Śiva. The open pedestal in front of the cella now accommodates fragmentary sculptures and remains of an elaborately carved doorframe with multiple *śākhās.*

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Temple Nos. 11, 12 *and* 13 :

These are simply square structures with a conical *śikhara* executed entirely in lime and fragments of other temple parts. They are not associated with any shrine nor do they have sculptures. Of these, No. 11 is called the Hanūmān temple. However, none of these contains any image originally belonging to the temple.

14. *Gaṇeśa Temple* :

This is a small structure comprising a small cella and a *maṇḍapa*. The temple is completely renovated and bears no architectural or sculptural distinction. The *śikhara* is pyramidal in two tiers. The cella contains an image of four-armed Gaṇeśa (Fig. 1, No. 14).

15. *Viśveśvara Temple* :

The temple is situated close to the southern enclosure wall which is pierced by a gateway leading to the stepped *ghāṭ* (Fig. 1, No. 15).

Though much simpler in conception, it resembles on plan the Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple (No. 4) with the components comprising a cella, *antarāla* or vestibule and a *maṇḍapa*.

The doorframe of the cella is similar to that of Yamadharma, but the execution is cruder. The cella enshrines a Śiva-*liṅga*, whereas the niche in the back wall of the same contains a crude figure of a *devī*.

The *sabhāmaṇḍapa* is completely renovated. There is no *raṅga-śilā* and the pillars are severely plain with square abacus and rolled brackets with inverted *nāgaśīrṣa*. The square base of these pillars contains panels depicting Śiva and Bhairava.

The *śikhara* is completely ruined.

16. *Bhīmeśvara Temple* :

Though of considerable proportions and square on plan, the temple has no architectural features worth note. The doorframe of the cella is similar to that in the Yamadharma. The cella contains a Śiva-*liṅga* and the *śikhara* is pyramidal and renovated.

17. *Vīreśvara Temple* :

This lies close to the south of No. 16 and is a small square shrine with pyramidal roof. The doorframe of the cella is similar in decoration to that of Yamadharma. A Śiva-*liṅga* is enshrined inside.

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18. *Maṇḍapa* :

This is square on plan with four pillars, one at each of the corners. The roof is missing and the pillars are plain. This now contains a number of fragmentary sculptures, mostly of Śiva-Pārvatī.

Other Remains :

Besides the temples, there are deposited within the precincts of the temple-complex and outside it, numerous sculptures, fragments of decorative elements, parts of doorframes, panels depicting the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and scenes associated with the life and deeds of Śiva.

However, a monument forming a class by itself is available in the form of a commemorative pillar or "*vīragaḷ*" which can be located in front of the Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. Its very nature shows that it must have been planted there later, as it has no bearing whatsoever with the temple complex. Moreover, the crudity of the sculptures on its four faces helps in assigning the *vīragaḷ* to a period later than that of the temples.

The pillar is square and has a broader square base. All the four faces of the shaft are sculpted (Pl. X, No. 1).

The carvings are executed in roughly squarish and rectangular niches. The eastern face has five niches, the southern four, western three and northern only two. The topmost panel in the case of all the faces, bears the *kīrtimukha*.

The eastern face has five panels, one above the other. The lowermost depicts the widow seated on a funeral pyre in flames, with the head of her dead husband on her lap. She has raised her right hand. The panel above this shows a woman riding a horse. She holds two indistinct objects in her hands. To her left and in front of the horse is shown a lady standing with a basket on her head. The third panel shows a lady each on either side of a Śiva-*liṅga*. The lady to the right is shown handing over an ornament to the lady on the left. The next upper panel has a seated couple. The topmost panel has the *kīrtimukha*.

The south face has only four panels, three of which are greater in height than those on the eastern face. The lowermost panel depicts an elephant with upraised trunk walking right. The next one has a male figure each on either side of the central motif consisting of *gadā*, capped by *śaṅkha* topped by a *cakra*. Obviously these stand for Viṣṇu. The upper one shows *Veṇugopāla*.

The western face has three panels, the third and topmost being that of *kīrtimukha*. The lowermost shows two dancing females. The panel above depicts a couple worshipping Gaṇeśa, a Śiva-*liṅga* and the Nandī seated on a lotus. The Gaṇeśa, seated in

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ardhaparyaṅka, is four armed and holds *paraśu*, *aṅkuśa* and *modaka*, while the fourth hand rests on his lap.

The northern face has only two panels of which the upper one depicts the *kīrtimukha* and the lower one shows a fight between two persons equipped with bows and arrows.

Enclosure Wall :

The entire temple complex is enclosed by a wall built of massive blocks of stone. The wall is broad at the base and the upper courses are indented to be capped at the uppermost course by a plano-convex coping (Fig. 4, No. 6). The wall is pierced at the southern side by a gateway which is double storeyed, the upper storey being used by musicians.

REFERENCES :

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.
2. p. 32.
3. *See* Pl. III, 1.
4. Pl. IV, 1; VII and VIII.
5. Pl. IX.
6. Pl. VI.
7. Pl. III, 2.
8. Cunningham has, however, illustrated one original pillar : *See* Fig. 4, No. 2.
9. Permentier very aptly compared them to "the slats of a venetian blind lying on the slant." Zannas and Auboyer, *Khajuraho*, p. 113.
10. Krishna Deva, The Temples of Khajuraho in Central India, *Anc. Ind.*, No. 15, Pl. XXXI.
11. Krishna Deva, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
12. Krishna Deva, *op. cit.*, p. 57, Pl. XXXIII; Also Goswami, A., *Designs from Orissan Temples*, Pl. 25.
13. Zannas, E., *Khajuraho*, Pls. I-III.
14. Similar decoration occurs on the Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, *See* Zannas, *op. cit.*, Pl. XIII.

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VI ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The foregoing survey of the group of temples and other stray remains at Mārkaṇḍi brings out certain architectural and other distinctive traits which it may be fruitful to summarise here.

Save a few badly renovated minor shrines, the Mārkaṇḍī group of temples presents an architectural homogeneity. It is true that the *śikharas* of the minor cognate temples are plain as compared to that of the main temple which, though now in ruins, betrays its ornamental nature. But the former, though simple, show a basic cognate style employed in the make-up of the spire.

Except the main temple of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi or Mārkaṇḍeśvara all the other shrines in this group are on a platform or some sort of *jagatī*. The latter is a marked feature of the temples at Khajuraho. It is likely that the main temple at Mārkaṇḍī had also a basal platform which appears to have been covered up, possibly at a later date, by brick work. If this is so, then all these temples have a common architectural feature in the form of a *jagatī*. Whereas, however, in the case of the minor shrines, the *adhiṣṭhānas* are relatively plain, that of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple is embellished by ornamental mouldings which create a wonderful effect of light and shade and give a dimensional feeling to whatever face we look at.

Whereas the accessory shrines are of modest plans, the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple is of the *nirandhāra* type having only one cross arm, and thus appears simpler on plan as compared to the elaborate *sāndhāra* temples at Khajuraho.

In plan again, the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple is simple with *ardhamaṇḍapa*, *maṇḍapa*, *antarāla* and *garbhagṛha* forming the components of the entire set up. We do not come across here the ornate plans as in the somewhat earlier temples of Khajuraho. It, however, appears that the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple had originally lateral transepts, though at present one does not come across the balconied windows.

It is in the exquisite treatment of the external wall faces that the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple recalls the Khajuraho group. The *jaṅghā* or the wall portion of this temple gracefully accommodates three registers of "statutory of exquisite grace and charm." In relation to the geometrical mouldings of the base, the *jaṅghā* with graceful human

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figures presents a world at once lively and full of sheer beauty of female form and grace, and dignity of mighty gods. One is at once reminded of the Kandariyā Mahādeva Temple.[1] This arrangement presents "a veritable gallery of female types of ravishing beauty, vaunting their voluptuous charms in an infinite variety of lovely attitudes and postures".

However, surprisingly enough, the erotic element is much on the wane at Mārkaṇḍī. The starkly erotic sculptures of Khajuraho are absent here. Though not absent, the erotic depiction is restricted solely to minor representations on a frieze here and there. The "coquettish langour and frankly erotic suggestion" which distinguishes the Khajuraho School is generally absent in the figures of the *Surasundarīs* at Mārkaṇḍī.

REFERENCE :

1. Krishna Deva, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIII.

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VII DATE

Obviously the temples in the Mārkaṇḍī group fall in two groups, *viz.*– the main Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple with the Nandi pavilion in front and the cluster of subsidiary shrines in the same precincts. However, the Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple (*ante*, p. 11) seems to represent an intermediate stage between the elaborately planned Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and the smaller shrines with simple plans.

The dating of the Mārkaṇḍī Temples can be attempted on the basis of stylistic considerations, the sculptural pattern and a few inscriptions which are found carved at random on some parts of the basement mouldings and *jaṅghā* portion of the main temple.

Stylistically, the main temple recalls some of the features of Khajuraho as testified in some sort of a platform (*jagatī*), moulded *adhiṣṭhāna*, triple bands of sculptures on the *jaṅghā* with niches containing icons, a plethora of *Surasundarīs* and *vyālas*, the *śālābhañjikā* false brackets resting externally against the *adhiṣṭhāna* (and reminding one of similar element as at the Dhuladev Temple of Khajuraho),[1] the *sāndhāra* plan of the main temple, the dominance of Śaiva icons very similar to those depicted at Khajuraho, the essentially pyramidal conception of the *śikharas* over the *sabhāmaṇḍapa* and the lofty *śikhara* over the *garbhagṛha* embellished by the repeated motif of miniature *śikharas*, capped by a huge *āmalaka* with *kalaśa* and *vījapuraka* – all these qualify the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple to be designated as the Khajuraho of the Vidarbha region.

As for the dates assigned to the Khajuraho group, scholars hold different opinions. Whereas it is generally held that these temples were built between c. 950–1050 A. D., Prof. SARASWATI[2] does not take any temple to be earlier than "the second half of the eleventh century A. D.," while KRISHNA DEVA[3] proposes "that the earliest temple cannot be much later than 850 and the latest may go beyond 1100." Roughly, therefore, these temples, if one accommodates all these views, can be placed between the 9th and the 11th centuries A. D.

Inspite of the architectural, iconographic and sculptural similarities referred to above between the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and the Khajuraho Temples in general, it appears that the former shows a decline both in proportion of architectural planning and the depiction of figure sculpture, though the parentage is too obvious. In terms of proportions, elaboration of plan, the vertical magnificence of the *Śikhara* and the

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suppleness and graceful liquidity of human form, the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple seems to fall short of the maturity of Khajuraho.

In addition, the inscriptions on some parts of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple – though these could be later additions –, could be dated not earlier than the 11th century A. D., as will be shown later.

From these considerations, it would be logical to assign the Mārkaṇḍī group to 11th century A. D. None of the temples can be assigned to 9th century A. D. Moreover, taking into consideration the distance between Khajuraho and Mārkaṇḍī, it is apparent that the influence, if at all, must have taken quite some time to reach Mārkaṇḍī, at least a couple of centuries.

Another noteworthy aspect of Mārkaṇḍī Temples is that they are more or less free from the eroticism of Khajuraho sculptures. Though the former are essentially Śaiva shrines, it appears that this region was not as fully under the grip of the Śākta sects like the Kaula-Kāpālikas, as Khajuraho was. As such, the Mārkaṇḍī Temples may be put to a period posterior to that in which the Śāktas were in ascendancy in Central India.

The cloistered corridor as conceived in the Daśāvatāra Temple at Mārkaṇḍī is indeed a very degenerate copy, if at all, of the Yoginī Temples, both at Khajuraho and Bherāghaṭ. As such, it can be assigned to a period later than both these. Thus if the Daśāvatāra Temple, which possibly formed an important part of the architectural plan of the entire complex at Mārkaṇḍī, is to be taken as contemporary with the main temple – then also, the Mārkaṇḍī group has to be dated later.

It is logical, therefore, to hold that the Mārkaṇḍī group of temples occupy a position midway between Khajuraho and the full-fledged Yādava Temples. However, the treatment of the *Śikhara*, the three-registers of sculptures, the abundance of *vyāla* depictions and the dominance of the Śaiva pantheon leave no doubt about the Khajuraho ancestry of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The latter may thus bea ssigned to late 11th century A. D.

REFERENCES :

1. Krishna Deva, *op. cit.*, Pl. XLIV.
2. *The Struggle for Empire*, History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. V (Bombay, 1957), p. 565.
3. *op. cit.*, p. 49.

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As stated earlier, there is a dominance of Śaiva or rather Śiva sculptures in the Mārkaṇḍī group of temples. Apart from those associated with the main temple, i. e. Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, the niches in the subsidiary temples around the former also depict different forms of Śiva. Even among the sculptures placed in the precincts, the Śiva theme dominates.

Besides Śiva, other deities represented comprise Gaṇeśa, the different forms of the consort of Śiva, Sūrya, Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī and the *Dikpālas* along with a host of *Surasundarīs* and the *vyālas*.

Apart from the normal representations of Śiva, the most noteworthy icons from Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple are those which are essentially syncretistic.

All these are dealt with below.

(*A*) *Śiva–Pārvatī*

This group comprises two varieties :

(i) standing icons (*sthānakamūrtis*)

and (ii) seated icons (*āsanamūrtis*).

The former are represented in larger numbers than the latter, and find place on all the four wall faces of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. Śiva-Pārvatī images are not associated with any of the subsidiary temples.

(*i*) *Sthānakamūrtis* (standing icons) :

Pl. XI, No. 1 : This shows Śiva and Pārvatī standing, the latter to the left of the former. The *vāhana* of Śiva, the bull Nandi, is shown near the right leg of Śiva. Śiva is four armed, the upper right holding the *triśūla*, the lower right, held in *varada*, has an *akṣamālā* (rosary), the upper left passes around the neck of Pārvatī and the fingers touch the breast of Pārvatī; the lower right holds a pot (*kamaṇḍalu*). Śiva has a plain circular halo behind his head, has a *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, circular disc ear-rings,

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a series of necklaces, girdle with loop and pendant chains, armlet, wristlet, finger ring, leg and foot ornaments. He is shown standing in *tribhaṅga*.

Pārvatī, standing to his left, has a round halo (*prabhāvalī*) behind her head; a tiered, cabled and tapering *karaṇḍamukuṭa*, circular and pendant ear-rings, necklaces and girdles similar to that of Śiva. Her *uttarīya* seems to go behind her shoulder, passes around her left arm and hangs loosely at her left side. Her right hand passes around the neck of Śiva while the left one is broken. The treatment of the neck in both these cases appears to be stiff with triple folds.

Pl. XI, No. 2 : This depiction of Śiva-Pārvatī appears to have been a later replacement as the figures are less artistic and somewhat stumpy. The deities here are without the halo and the ornaments appear to be stiff. Nandī is shown near the right leg of Śiva. In the upper right hand, Śiva holds the *triśūla* which is different than the one shown in No. 1. The ear-rings, though disc-shaped, have a beaded periphery.

Pārvatī has an outsize chignon resting behind her left shoulder. Her right hand passes around the neck of Śiva and the left holds a bud with stalk (*padmakalikā*).

Pl. XII, No. 1 : It appears that the female figure in this group has been replaced later as the break in between the two figures shows. Moreover, instead of the usual *āliṅgana* pose, the female figure faces the opposite direction though it is of Pārvatī.

Here the icon of Śiva is very similar to that depicted in Pl. XI, No. 1, except the difference that the left hand holds a triple-hooded *sarpa* (snake). There is a slight difference in the leg ornaments, and the figure appears to stand in *samabhaṅga*, with a small Nandī seated near the right foot of Śiva.

Pārvatī has a halo behind her head; all other features are similar to those in Pl. XI, No. 1, with the difference that she holds in her right hand a bud with a long stalk and in her right hand a fruit (*bījapūraka*).

Pl. XII, No. 2 : This is similar to Pl. XI, No. 1 with the difference that here both the arms of Pārvatī are intact; the right one is placed around the neck of Śiva and the left one holds a lotus bud with stalk.

Pl. XIII, No. 1 : This is similar to Pl. XII, No. 2, but is without the halo.

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(ii) *Seated Icons of Śiva–Pārvatī (Āsanamūrtis)* :

These are represented by lesser number of specimens than those in Category (i) but are more varied in representation.

Pl. XVI, No. 3 : This shows Śiva seated in *savyalalitāsana* with Pārvatī on his left lap. She is shown seated in *vāmalalitāsana*. Śiva is six-armed with the upper right holding the *triśūla*, the lower right with an *akṣamālā* held in *abhaya*, and the middle right is broken; the upper left passes behind Pārvatī and touches her breast (*āliṅganamurti*), the middle one holds a triple-hooded *sarpa* (snake) and the lower one has a circular *darpaṇa* (mirror). Śiva wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, circular disc ear-rings, a series of necklaces, a long *hāra*, a graded girdle and a loose leg ornament.

Two-armed Pārvatī has her right arm around the neck of Śiva. In her left hand she holds an object which is broken. The arm rests on her left knee. She wears a tiered and cabled *mukuṭa* (*karaṇḍamukuṭa*) and a series of necklaces, armlets, bracelets, leg ornaments and anklets.

Nandī is shown seated near the right leg of Śiva and facing right, while Pārvatī's vehicle, the lion, is shown below her. A *gaṇa* is shown to the right of Śiva.

(*B*) *Individual Icons of Śiva*

These icons depict Śiva mostly in standing posture and without his consort Pārvatī.

(*i*) *Śiva Mahāyogī* :

Pl. XIII, No. 3 : Though mutilated, the icon is six-armed, with the right arms not extant. Śiva is shown seated in *padmāsana* and has in his left hands, *khatvāṅga*, *sarpa* and possibly *mātuliṅga* fruit. He wears a crown with skulls at the lower border. His face has gaping eyes, lips pressed in determination and has a beard. He wears ear-rings, necklaces, *yajñopavīta* and a long *hāra* which falls over his legs held in *padmāsana*. It is possible to identify *kapāla* (skull-cup) in one of his left hands.

It appears that this is possibly the terrible (*raudra*) form of Śiva shown seated in meditation as *Mahāyogī*.

Besides those referred to above, Śiva has been represented in different forms at Mārkaṇḍī. They comprise dancing Śiva, Śiva in the act of killing the demon *Andhaka* and a variety of Bhairavas.

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(C) *Dancing Śiva (Nṛityamūrtis)*

This representation is available in two specimens.

Pl. XIV, No. 2 : This icon is eight-armed and beautifully carved, though mutilated. Śiva wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and holds in his right hands a *ḍamaru*, *triśūla* and *ghaṇṭā*. The fourth hand is broken. The right leg is bent at the knee in the act of dancing. The left hands hold a *ghaṇṭā*, *kheṭaka* and *kapāla*. The fourth hand is broken, as also the leg which appears to have been bent and held aslant. Śiva wears *sarpa-kuṇḍalas*, *sarpa-mālā*, a *yajñopavīta* and a long *hāra*. To his right is seated the Nandī with his mouth uplifted and directed towards Śiva. To the left of the latter is a drummer.

Pl. XV, No. 1 : Though shown in a dancing posture, the depiction of Śiva here is different from the one described above. Here Śiva is eight armed, and the right hands have a *ḍamaru*, *triśūla*, possibly a *sarpa* and the fourth is held aslant the breast in *jñānamudrā*. The three left hands possess a *khaṭvāṅga*, *kapāla*, bud of a flower (*mukula*), whereas the fourth is held out with open palm. Śiva is wearing normal ornaments. The drummer is to his right and Nandī to left.

(D) *Saṁhāra-Mūrtis of Śiva*

Andhakāsuravadhamūrtī Śiva :

This form is represented by two specimens, one belonging to the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and the other coming from the niche in the south wall of the Umāśaṅkara Temple to the west of the former.

In both these, the depiction is forceful and the face of Śiva displays terrific anger as is clear from his raised brows, outsize eyes, open mouth showing his teeth, and the bearded and moustached face.

Pl. XIV, No. 1 : Śiva wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* bordered by gaping *kapālas*. Besides the normal ornaments, he wears *sarpa-kuṇḍalas* and *sarpahāra*. In his right hands he holds a *ḍamaru*, *gaḍā*, *khaḍga* and a long spear the upper part of which is broken. In his right ones, he bears a *kheṭaka* (shield), *kapāla* (skull-cup) and another *āyudha* which is broken. In two of his hands he forcefully holds the trident with which he trounces the demon Andhaka whose arms can be seen in the right hand corner.

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For sheer force, the depiction of Śiva is magnificient as is indicated by the firm planting of his right leg and the onward push of the upper half of the body with the head proudly held aloft.[1]

Pl. XVI, No. 1 : This occurs in the niche of the south face of the Umāśaṅkara Temple. Though more intact than the former, this is less artistic as the suppleness and liquidity of form are not of the grade which is apparent in the former. However, this appears to have six arms, in the three right ones of which Śiva holds a *gadā*, a *khaḍga* (blade not extant) and the third one holds the staff of the trident. The figure does not seem to wear *sarpa-hāra* or *sarpa-kuṇḍalas*. The left hands hold a *kapāla*, the staff of the trident and another weapon the end of which can be seen. The triple fork of the trident has pierced the stomach of the Andhaka demon.

The face of Śiva here appears rather large and lacks the vividity of expression. The body is rather heavy, lacking force or flow.

(*E*) *Raudra-Mūrtis of Śiva*

Kaṅkāla-Bhikṣāṭana Murtī :

This occurs on the south face of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple in Register No. 3, i. e. the topmost. This is the only representation of this kind. As is well known, this category is found represented more in the South than in the North. It combines the features of both and, as such, has been grouped under a dual nomenclature.

Pl. XVII, No. 4 : This shows a standing figure in the act of walking to right. The head is broken but the *jaṭābhāra* is shown flowing on the shoulder. The figure wears an *ekāvali* and a girdle to which possibly a small pendant bell (on the right hip) is attached. The figure also wears an *uttarīya*. It is two-armed and holds a *kapāla* (skull cup) in his right hand and the folded left arm holds in position the *khaṭvāṅga*. The left is in *saṁdarśana mudrā* (turned inwards).[2]

(*F*) *Bhairava*

Relatively the representations of Bhairava at Mārkaṇḍī are more numerous than any other form of Śiva. Amongst these representations, Nagna-Bhairavas dominate.

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Pl. XVII, No. 1 : This is associated with the north face of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and depicts eight-armed Bhairava holding in his right hands a *khaṭvāṅga*, *kapāla*, *naramuṇḍa* (human head) and a *kartarī*. The left hands hold a *ḍamaru*, *triśūla*, *khaḍga* and in the fourth hand an object which is now broken. The figure is bearded, has moustache, wide open eyes and wears *sarpa-kuṇḍalas*, *sarpa-hāra* and a *yajñopavīta*. From his girdle hang bells, one each on each thigh. It also wears a long *hāra* at the lower portion of which are a series of five skulls. It has a fan-shaped headwear with *sarpas*. The figure is naked. Three dogs, the cognisance of Bhairava, are shown, one after the other, behind his legs.

Pl. XVII, No. 2 : This one, a stray sculpture in the Daśāvatāra Temple, is of cruder workmanship. This is also nude and may, by virtue of its stum piness, be designated as of *Baṭuka Bhairava*.
This is four armed, holding in his right upper a *khaḍga*, in lower right the strap with which the dog is tied. The upper left has a *kheṭaka* and the lower one rests on the *gadā*. The god has a tight and curly hairdo surrounded by a *sarpa*. He also wears *sarpa-kuṇḍalas*, *sarpa-hāra*, *sarpa*-armlets and a girdle with two pendant bells. He also wears probably wooden sandals.

The sculpture is not proportionate and stylistically appears to be later than the one described above.

Pl. XVII, No. 3 : The depiction of this icon can be had on the western wall of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The god has four arms. The right ones hold a *khaḍga* (sword) and a cruved circular object (looking like the tusk of an elephant); the left ones hold a *kheṭaka* and a *nara-muṇḍa*. The figure has a beard and moustach and wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and *sarpa-hāra*. The *mukuṭa* and the long *hāra* are embellished by skulls. The deity has planted his right leg on the leg of the *preta* who forms his cognisance.

Śaiva Female Deities

There are not many representations of Śaiva deities at Mārkaṇḍī. Only two deities are depicted; they are :

(i) Cāmuṇḍā

and (ii) Bhairavī.

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(*a*) *Cāmuṇḍā* :

Cāmuṇḍā has been shown twice. Both these depictions occur on the north face. However, one belongs to Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and the other to the Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

Pl. XIX, No. 1 : This appears on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The goddess is eight-armed with the right hands holding *ḍamaru*, *triśūla*, *triśūla*, (the fourth being broken); the left ones hold a *khaṭvāṅga*, a *nara-muṇḍa* and *kāpāla*, the fourth being folded; she wears *jaṭāmukuṭa* with a border of skulls and *sarpa-kuṇḍalas*, *sarpa-hāra* and *sarpa-mekhalā*; she has a terrible look and has *suṣka-stanas*; her belly is emaciated and has a scorpion in it; she has the skin of the elephant (*gaja-carma*) behind her head. She is flanked on either side by *bhūtas* and she dances on a *preta* which is being attacked by jackals.

Pl. XIX, No. 2 : This depiction is also similar to that described above.

(*b*) *Bhairavī* (Pl. XVIII, No. 2) :

This is a solitary representation of Bhairavī which occurs on the south face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The goddess is shown standing in *dvibhaṅga* and is two-armed. Besides the usual ornaments she wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* capped by skulls and a long *hāra* with four skulls at the lower fringe. In her right hand she holds a *kapāla* and her left hand in *kartarī-mudrā* supports a *khaṭvāṅga*. Her look is fierce due to angry staring eyes.

Gaṇeśa

Gaṇeśa has been represented by five depictions of which three are *in situ* as part of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, whereas one (Pl. XXI, No. 1, in right hand niche) appears to have been a later installation, and yet one more (Pl. XXI, No. 2) is a loose sculpture now deposited in the Daśāvatāra Temple.

Of the five, two are *āsana-mūrtis* (seated icons), two are *sthānaka* (standing) and one is *nṛtta* (dancing).

(*a*) *Nṛtta Gaṇeśa* (Pl. XX, No. 1) :

This is the only specimen and is, by all standards, the finest representation at Mārkaṇḍī. The image occurs on the south face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and is one of the loveliest icons in the entire range.

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The sculpture shows Gaṇeśa with eight arms standing in *atibhaṅga* posture. Two of the three right hands contain *paraśu*, *daṁta*; the uppermost possibly has a *nāga* while the fourth is held in *abhinaya*. The left hands hold *puṣpa* (flower) and *modaka pātra*, the uppermost possibly the tail of the *nāga*, whereas the fourth is folded in line with the right one. The god wears head–, neck–, leg–, and arm-ornaments and has a *sarpa-yajñopavīta*. It has prominent *śūrpa-karṇas* and the god's mount, the mouse, is shown below in a rectangular shallow panel.

Similar sculptures are available from Khajuraho.[3]

(*b*) *Standing Gaṇeśa* (Pl. XX, No. 2; Pl. XXI, No. 1) :

These are represented at two places in the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The one in Pl. XX, No. 2 appears in Register 2 of the SW corner of the temple, whereas that in Pl. XXI, No. 1 (left hand side) is on the pillar in front of the vestibule of the same temple. That on the temple exterior (P. XX, No. 2) is rather badly damaged with all the four arms broken. The trunk is also broken as also the right foot. Besides the usual ornaments, the god is shown wearing the *sarpa-yajñopavīta*.

The icon on the pillar in front of the vestibule is intact. It is four-armed with the right hands holding a *paraśu* (axe) and *daṁta*, whereas the left ones hold lotus flower with a long stalk and a bowl full of *modakas*.

(*c*) *Seated Gaṇeśa* (Pl. XXI, Nos. 1–2) :

Two specimens represent this type. Both, however, do not seem to have formed part and parcel of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple as one (Pl. XXI, No. 1) seems to have been placed (later) in a niche in the wall of the lateral projection. Even the outline of the niche is irregular. However, the figure is well executed. It is four armed with the right ones holding a *paraśu* and *daṁta*, and the left ones a lotus flower and a bowl of *modakas*. Its mount, the mouse, is shown in the panel below.

Specimen illustrated in Pl. XXI, No. 2 is a loose sculpture now placed in the Daśāvatāra Temple. Though similar to the above, it is relatively crudely executed and has a shallow relief.

Vaiṣṇava Icons

Vaiṣṇava sculptures are indeed very few, represented as they are by three specimens of which two are loose sculptures now lying in the Daśāvatāra Temple.

Stylistically, Pl. XXII, Nos. 1 and 3 seem to belong to the typical Mārkaṇḍī style, while No. 2 appears to be a later piece as the facial crudeness and the elongation of figures show.

Of the three, two are Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī figures, while No. 3 is the Nṛivarāha form of Viṣṇu.

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(*i*) *Standing Viṣṇu–Lakṣmī* (*Sthānakamūrti*) :

The *sthānaka* form of Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī appears in the third register (i. e. topmost) on the northern face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple (Pl. XXI, No. 1).

Viṣṇu stands to the right of his consort. In his two right hands he holds respectively the *gadā* and the *cakra*. The holding of the *cakra* in folded right palm is noteworthy. His upper left arm passes around Lakṣmī and the fingers touch her breast. In the lower left, he holds the *śaṅkha*. He wears a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, heavy ear-rings, a series of *hāras* of which one is a long *hāra*. He is also shown wearing the *yajñopavīta*. It is significant to note that all the three sculptures show Viṣṇu wearing an ornament like *Chhannavīra*.

Lakṣmī, standing close to the left of Viṣṇu, has her right arm around her consort, whereas in her left hand she holds what appears like the bud of a lotus flower. She stands in *tribhaṅga*, wears a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and a series of pully-shaped ear-rings. Her massive chignon is arranged over her left shoulder.

Garuḍa seated and in *añjali-mudrā* is shown to the right of Viṣṇu.

There is nothing new in the delineation of this icon.

(*ii*) *Seated Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī* (*Āsanamūrti*) :

This is a solitary representation (Pl. XXII, No. 2) in the form of a loose sculpture. As noted earlier, the workmanship of the piece is rather crude and it appears to be later than the classical Mārkaṇḍī sculptures.

The four-armed Viṣṇu is seated in *savyalalitāsana* with Lakṣmī seated on his left lap in corresponding posture. In his upper right hand, he holds the lotus with stalk, in the lower right *śaṅka*; the upper left, which passes behind Lakṣmī, holds the *gadā* and the lower left contains the *cakra*. The god wears a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and circular ear-rings beaded at the periphery. The neck is stiff with *trivali* while the face appears somewhat outsize with big eyes.

Lakṣmī is also four-armed holding in her left hands lotus flower and the *bījapūraka*, while one of her right hands passes around her consort and rests on his right shoulder, the other holding some indistinct object.

Garuḍa is shown below the seated couple with the palms of his hands supporting the right leg of Viṣṇu and the left leg of Lakṣmī. Below the leg of Lakṣmī is shown a fully caparisoned elephant, whereas below Viṣṇu's leg is possibly a water lily. Garuḍa has a halo behind his head and his wings appear to have been folded on each shoulder.

(*iii*) *Nṛivarāha* (Pl. XXII, No. 3) :

This is a solitary representation and a stray piece. The proportion and style assign it to the Mārkaṇḍī group.

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Unfortunately the figure is badly damaged and the legs and two arms are not extant. The figure is shown standing in *ālidhāsana* and has a forceful delineation. Its lower right arm is placed forcefully on its right thigh, whereas the upper left, folded and holding the *cakra*, supports *Bhūdevī*. The *Nṛivarāha* wears a series of ornaments and a small dagger on the waist belt and is certainly noteworthy for force and elegance of proportion.[4]

Syncretistic Icons

Four very interesting syncretistic icons are available on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. Of these, Pl. XXIII, No. 1 and Pl. XV, No. 3 are unique[5], whereas No. 2 has a parallel from Khajuraho.[6]

(*a*) *Hara-Brahmā-Viṣṇu* or (*Vilakṣaṇa*) *Sadāśiva* (Pl. XXIII, No. 1) :

This is indeed a unique icon located in Register No. 3 on the south face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. It shows features of Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

The figure is shown seated and has three faces. It is very interesting to note that the triple figure has four legs. Since the syncretistic icon combines three gods – Hara, Bramhā and Viṣṇu – it implies that the three gods will have in all six legs. However, even in syncretistic icons, the showing of more than two legs is rather unusual. The icon has eight arms. KRISHNA DEVA refers to such Vilakṣana Sadāśiva representations at Khajuraho.[7]

The main god is shown seated in *padmāsana* with wide staring eyes like those of Bhairava. The upper right hand holds a *ḍamaru*, the middle one a *triśūla*, the third placed on the right lap contains a *bījapūraka* whereas the fourth is folded and settles in front of the chest covering a vertically beaded object (possibly rosary) placed over the palm of one of the left hands.

The three left hands contain, from top downwards, a *pothī* (book), *khaṭvāṅga* and a *ghaṭa* (pot). The fourth, as described above, is folded and supports a vertically beaded object, possibly rosary.

The two other legs are firmly planted on the pedestal whereas the icon is shown seated on an *āsana*.

The head, neck, arm, chest and leg ornaments are usual.

The *vāhana* of Śiva, Nandī, is shown to the left of the icon.

Of the attributes held in the hands, the *bījapūraka* and the *ghaṭa* are associated with some forms of Viṣṇu, the *ḍamaru*, *triśula* and *khaṭvāṅga* are those of Śiva, while the *pothī* is the attribute of Brahmā.

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The enlarged fearful eyes and the *khaṭvāṅga* imply that the form intended is of *Raudra* type of Śiva.

It is in all respects a unique syncretistic icon, though the features of Śiva dominate.

(*b*) *Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha-Arka* (Pl. XXIII, No. 2) :

This syncretistic icon occurs in Register No. 1 on the west face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

As has been stated earlier, this icon has parallels from Khajuraho[8] in the Pratāpeśvara and Chitragupta Temples.

The icon is a *sthānakamūrti* in *samabhaṅga* with eight arms. The two extant right hands hold a full blown lotus flower and *akṣamālā*, while the third appears to have held a *triśūla*. The four left hands hold respectively a full blown lotus flower, a ladle (*śruk*), the *cakra* and a *ghaṭa*.

Aruṇa, the charioteer is seen below driving the group of seven horses. Aruṇa is supposed to be an invalid and hence only his upper body is shown. He is holding reins in his left hand and a whip in his right. At his back is shown *Bhūdevī* with her right hand in *abhayamudrā*.

On either side, near the legs of the icon, are two male figures with a pen and a palm leaf. These represent *Daṇḍa* and *Piṅgala*.

The god wears the usual ornaments. As compared to the Khajuraho specimens, the Markaṇḍī representation is more majestic, proportionate and graceful.

(*c*) *Śiva-Brahmā-Kārttikeya* (?) (Pl. XV, No. 3) :

This is a unique depiction of syncretistic nature at Mārkaṇḍī. It occurs in Register No. 2 on the south face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

It is a *sthānaka-mūrti* with possibly eight arms, of which all but two are broken. The god is three-faced and holds in his left hands a *kheṭaka* (shield) and a *pothī*. The faces have a very determined look and the god wears the usual ornaments besides a long *hāra*. A peacock with the head broken and with the long plumage decorated is shown standing behind the legs of the god.

A bearded devotee in *namaskāra-mudrā* is shown seated below.

This is a unique icon in respect of both proportion and syncretism.

(*d*) *Triple-headed Śiva* (Pl. XV, No. 2) :

This depicts a triple-headed *Yogāsana mūrti* of Śiva in Register No. 3 on the west face of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

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The god is shown seated in *padmāsana*. It originally seems to have eight arms. The right hands hold *triśūla*, *ḍamaru*, *akṣamālā* in *abhaya*. The left hands are broken, but one is shown holding a triple-hooded *nāga*. Two of the hands are possibly shown as *kaṭaka-hasta*. The three heads wear *jaṭā-mukuṭa* with skull-motif.

The bull *vāhana* of Śiva is shown seated in a panel below the god.

It is not possible to identify the icon as the cognizances in the left hands are broken.

Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī

(*i*) *Lakṣmī* (Pl. XXIV, No. 1) :

The depiction of Lakṣmī singly is very rare at Mārkaṇḍī. The only representation is that of Gajalakṣmī which occurs in Register No. 3 on the south face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The sculpture shows the figure of Lakṣmī seated in *padmāsana*. Her upper hands contain each a full blown lotus or water lily each of which supports an elephant which are shown emptying a *jala-ghaṭa* over the head of the deity. Her lower right hand holds an *akṣamālā* and the left one supports a *ghaṭa*.

She wears elaborate ornaments of which the bracelets are noteworthy.

(*ii*) *Sarasvatī* (Pl. XXIV, No. 2) :

Sarasvatī finds a solitary representation in Register No. 3 on the north face of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The representation shows her seated (*āsanamūrti*). She is six-armed with a flower in her upper right, *akṣamālā* in her lower right; the third right plays upon the *vīṇā*; the upper left holds the *vīṇā*, the middle left has a *pothī* and the lower right has a *bījapūraka*. She wears abundant ornaments of which the armlets are noteworthy. The peacock, her mount, is shown in a shallow niche below her.

Aṣṭadikpālas

All the eight *Dikpālas* have been depicted in the sculptures associated with the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, and their depictions are more or less similar to those at Khajuraho, though their cardinal location is not in keeping with their traditional representation.

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As is well known, the *Dikpālas* or the Guardians of the Directions are eight in number. They are as follows :

(1) East	— *Indra*		(5) West	—	*Varuṇa*
(2) South-East	— *Agni*		(6) North-West	—	*Vāyu*
(3) South	— *Yama*		(7) North	—	*Kubera*
(4) South-West	— *Nirṛiti*	and	(8) North-East	—	*Īśāna*

The antiquity of the concept of the guardians of the directions goes back to the times of the *Atharvaveda*. There is no unanimity either on the names or the number of these. The latter ranges between four and ten in Sanskrit literature.

The *Dikpālas* are found to have been represented in the early mediaeval temples of India as at the Paraśurāmeśvara Temple at Bhuvaneśvar and the temples at Khajuraho. Several temples of the mediaeval period of the Deccan bear their representations.

(1) *Indra* (Pl. XXV, No. 2; XXVII, No. 2) :

Indra finds depiction at two places on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. Of these, one shows him with his consort and the other is without the consort.

Pl. XXV, No. 2, shows Indra and Śacī, both standing in *tribhaṅga*. The depiction finds its place in Register No. 1 on the east face of the temple. This is in keeping with the canonical dictum.

Indra is four-armed, holding in his upper right *vajra*, in the lower right *akṣa-mālā*; the upper left passes around his consort from behind and the fingers touch her breast. In the lower left hand he holds a *ghaṭa*. The god wears profuse ornaments including cabled *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, disc *karṇabhūṣaṇas* with beaded periphery, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, girdles and leg ornaments. He also wears a finger ring on each thumb. His mount, the *Airāvata*, is shown seated near his right leg.

Śacī also stands in *tribhaṅga* with her right arm passing around her lord from behind. In her left hand she holds a lotus bud.

The other representation (Pl. XXVII, No. 2) shows him singly. It occurs on the east face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The god is shown standing in *tribhaṅga* wearing a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and a number of ornaments. He also wears the *Yajñopavīta* and his lower garment is shown with the help of pairs of slanting wavy lines indicating folds.

The god is four-armed, holding in his upper right the *vajra*, the lower right is in *abhaya* and has an *akṣamālā*; the upper left has an *aṅkuśa* (goad) and the lower one holds a *ghaṭa*. His mount, the elephant *Airāvata*, is shown near his right leg.

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(2) *Yama* (Pl. XXV, No. 3 and Pl. XXVII, No. 1) :

Yama with his consort finds depiction in Register No. 1 on the south face of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. This is a solitary representation.

The god is shown standing in *dvibhaṅga*. Of the four hands, three are broken, but the lower left holds the *kukkuṭa* (the cock). His mount, the buffalo, is shown near his right leg. Yama has flaming hair, terrible eyes and tight lips.[9]

The other representation occurs in Register No. 1 on the SW corner of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The figure is shown standing in *samabhaṅga* and is four-armed. The upper right hand is broken, the lower one holds an *akṣamālā*; the upper left holds *triśūla*-headed *ghaṇṭā* and the lower left is broken.

The god has possibly *agni-śikhā* type coiffure bounded by a hooded serpent, out-size eyes, beard and moustache. His mount, the buffalo, is shown near his right leg.

(3) *Vāyu* (Pl. XXV, No. 1; XXVI, No. 1) :

Vāyu is depicted twice on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, once singly and at another place with his consort.

Pl. XXV, No. 1, shows Vāyu as represented on the north-west corner in Register No. 1. It shows the god standing in *dvibhaṅga*. The right hands hold a flag in the upper and *akṣamālā* in the lower; the upper left has *kamalanāla* (lotus stalk), while the lower one is broken. Possibly his hair jut out on either side of his *mukuṭa* indicative of his speed.

His attribute, the stag, is shown near his left leg.

The other representation (Pl. XXVI, No. 1) shows Vāyu with his consort. The god with four arms is shown standing in *dvibhaṅga*. The figure can be located in Register No. 1 on the north face of the same temple. In the upper right, the god holds the *dhvaja*, whereas the lower right in *varada* has an *akṣamālā*. The upper left passes round the waist of his consort from behind, whereas the lower left holds a *ghaṭa*. The wavy-horned stag, the symbol of Vāyu, is shown in a prancing posture near the right leg.

The consort of Vāyu is shown with her right arm passing around Vāyu, whereas the left one holds the lotus bud with stalk.

Both of them have a circular halo behind them.

(4) *Varuṇa* (Pl. XXVI, No. 2; XXVII, No. 3) :

Like the other *dikpālas*, Varuṇa also has been represented singly and with his consort.

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The representation with the consort occurs on Register No. 1 on the west face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple (Pl. XXVI, No. 2). It shows the god holding the *pāśa* in his upper right hand, the lower right being in *varada* and having an *akṣamālā*. The upper left has a *pustaka* and the lower left has the *kamaṇḍalu*. His mount, the *makara* (crocodile), is shown near the right leg. The god has a circular halo behind his head.

His consort is two armed, her right hand being in *varada* and having an *akṣamālā*, while the left hand is broken. She has also a circular halo behind her head.

Whereas Vāyu has *jaṭā-mukuṭa*, his consort has *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* which is cabled.

The other representation, without the consort, occurs in Register No. 1 in north-western corner of the same temple (Pl. XXVII, No. 3). Here the god is shown without the halo, but wearing a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, holding an elaborate *pāśa* in his upper right hand, the lower one has an *akṣamālā*; the upper left is broken and the lower left holds a *ghaṭa* or *kamaṇḍalu*. His mount, the *makara*, is shown near his right leg.

(5) *Kubera* (Pl. XXVII, No. 4) :

Kubera is represented only once at Mārkaṇḍī. The representation is available in Register No. 1 on the north face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

Unfortunately, the icon is damaged. He is four-armed, but two of his lower arms are broken. He supports a bag having a mouth similar to the mouth of a mongoose, by his two upper hands and the bag is shown in an arc behind his head.[10] Two treasure pots (*nidhīs*) are shown near the right leg of the god[11] who wears a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*.

(6) *Nirṛiti with Consort* (Pl. XVIII, No. 3) :

This is the only representation of Nirṛiti at Mārkaṇḍī. It is on the west face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The *Dikpāla* here is shown in a standing posture with his consort. The god is four-armed, holding in his lower right an *akṣamāla* (rosary) the palm of the hand being in *varada-mudrā*. The upper right holds a *khaḍga* (sword) which rests on his right shoulder. The upper left goes around his consort and its fingers touch the breast of the consort, whereas the lower left hand holds a *nara-muṇḍa* (human head) by its *śikhā*. The god bears a somewhat fierce look and wears *yajñopavīta*, *sarpahāra*, a girdle with a series of *kiṅkiṇīs* (tinkling bells), armlets, circular disc *kuṇḍalas* and a high and tapering *jaṭā-mukuṭa*. One bell each hangs on each of his thighs. The god appears to be naked. There is a reclining human figure just close to the god's right leg.

The consort of the god is heavily ornamented, stands in *tribhaṅga* and has put her right arm across the neck of the god.

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Nirṛiti occurs at Khajuraho on the Lakṣmaṇa and the Pārśvanātha Temples[12]. However, in both these cases, the *vāhana* and the *āyudhas* differ as compared to the Mārkaṇḍī representation. According to Rao,[13] a lion or a man could be the *vāhana* of Nirṛiti. The Pārśvanātha and the Lakshmaṇa Temple representations at Khajuraho are more or less similar to the Mārkaṇḍī depictions. The one from Lakṣamaṇa Temple shows him naked,[14] holding a *khaḍga* in his right hand and a *nara-muṇḍa* in left. The figure has *nara-vāhana*. However, the god is not shown with his consort at Khajuraho.[15]

(7) *Agni* (Pl. XXVIII, Nos. 1 and 3) :

Agni has been represented twice in Register No. 1 on the south face of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

Both the icons are shown standing and seem to have similar attributes, though No. 3 has both the lower hands broken. However, the intact sculpture shows the upper right hand holding a *sruk* (ladle), the lower right is in *varada* and holding an *akṣamālā*, the upper left has the *pustaka* and the lower one holds a *kamaṇḍalu*.

His *vāhana*, the ram, is shown near the left leg.[16] In both the representations Agni wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and has a beard and moustache.

(8) *Īśāna* (Pl. XIII, No. 2; XXVIII, No. 3)

The representation of Īśāna can be found on the north wall, second register, of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. Here the *Dikpāla* is shown four-armed with the upper right having a *triśūla*, the lower right in *varada* with *akṣamālā*; the upper left has a triple-hooded snake and the lower left holds a *kamaṇḍalu*. The figure stands in *tribhaṅga*, and wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* bordered by a row of skulls. The bull, his *vāhana*, is shown his left leg.

This *Dikpāla* has also been delineated with his consort in Register No. 3 in the north-east corner.

The god is shown (Pl. XXVIII, No. 2) with his consort. He is shown standing in *samabhaṅga* and is four-armed. The upper right has a *triśūla*, the lower right, in *varada*, holds an *akṣamālā*; the upper left passes around his consort, whereas the lower one has a *kamaṇḍalu*.

The consort of Īśānā has her right arm around the god and in her left hand she holds a *kamala-nāla* (lotus stalk.)

The *vāhana* of Īśāna, in this case, the bull, is shown (mutilated) near his right leg.

Īśāna the guardian deity of N–E, is very close to Śiva and is normally described as having the bull as his *vāhana*. Khajuraho has Īśāna icons with *triśūla* and *kamaṇḍalu*.[17]

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Minor Icons and Miscellaneous Sculptures

(1) *Vasu* (Pl. XXIX, Nos. 1–2) :

The *aṣṭavasus*, like *aṣṭadikpālas* were minor icons. They are said to have been born to Vasu, the daughter of Dakṣa.

On the basis of their description as given by GOPINATH RAO,[18] it appears that the Vasus are distinguished by *śaktī* in their left back hand. They are supposed to be eight in number and four-armed.

The Vasu images from Mārkaṇḍī are two in number. Both these belong to the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The one with his consort (Pl. XXIX, No. 1) is depicted on the north face in Register No. 3, whereas that without his consort comes from Register No. 3 in NE corner.

Pl. XXIX, No. 1 shows Vasu with his consort. The image is bull-headed and four-armed. The upper right holds a ladle (as in the case of Agni : Pl. XXVIII, No. 3), the lower right is in *varada* and holds a rosary (*akṣamālā*); the upper left passes around his consort and the lower right holds a *kamaṇḍalu*. Just near the right foot of the figure is a *ghaṭa*. The god wears abundant ornaments similar to those shown in the case of other icons from Mārkaṇḍī. His consort has her right arm around the neck of Vasu and her left holds a lotus flower with a long stalk (*kamalanāla*).[19]

The other depiction (Pl. XXIX, No. 2) is similar to above with the difference, however, that the god holds in his upper left hand a *pothī*. He has short horns and ears and wears a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*.

These two depictions are quite noteworthy. Though according to the canons, *Śaktī* should be associated with Vasus, none of the depictions at Mārkaṇḍī has it. Moreover, the association of a ladle and a *pothī* is quite unusual.

It may be mentioned here that the Pārśvanātha and Jagadambā temples at Khajuraho have the *aṣṭavasus* which are bull-faced and four armed.[20]

(2) *Candra* (Pl. XXX, No. 1) :

Candra is represented by a single specimen. The stray icon is at present kept in one of the niches of the *antarāla* of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The god is shown standing in *samabhaṅga*. He is two-armed, the right holding some indistinct object, possibly *kumuda* (lotus) and the left holds a *kamaṇḍalu*. The god is abundantly ornamented, wears a *yajñopavīta*, an *uttarīya* the ends of which flutter at both ends, a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa* and disc-earrings, and has a crescent behind his head.

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Normally Candra is shown with a chariot drawn by ten horses. However, the Mārkaṇḍī depiction is unusual in the sense that a big size *śaśaka* (hare) is shown standing behind the god. The mouth, the short ear, short tail and short legs leave no doubt that it is a hare.

However, the depiction is crude and the icon seems to belong to a later period.

(3) *Kaumārī* (Pl. XXX, No. 2) :

This loose icon is placed in the niche opposite to that in which the Candra image has been at present placed in the *antarāla* of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The goddess is shown riding a peacock. She is four-armed and seems to hold in her upper hands lotus flower. Her lower right hand rests on her right knee and the left one supports a baby. She seems to wear a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and only a few ornaments. It may be noted that she is shown wearing a tight fitting lower garment which is decorated or embroidered.

(4) *Gaṅgā and Yamunā* (Pl. XXX, No. 4)

These river goddesses are depicted on the doorjambs of the Yamadharma temple, close to the north of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. Gaṅgā is distinguished by her *vāhana*, the *makara* or crocodile and Yamuna by the *kūrma* or tortoise. Pl. XXX, No. 4, depicts Yamunā standing in *tribhaṅga*, holding in her right hand a *cāmara* (fly whisk) and in her left a *ghaṭa* (pot). Close to her left leg is shown a small tortoise. The goddess wears profuse ornaments and a crown embellished by elongated triangular members. A *Nāga* with five hoods is shown at the rear with palms folded in *namāskara-mudrā*.

(5) *Hari-Hara* (Pl. XXX, No. 3) :

Adjacent to the figure of Yamunā, in the *śākhā*, facing west, of the doorframe of the Yamadharma Temple, is a sycretistic icon combining the attributes of Viṣṇu and Śiva-Bhairava. The temple proper now enshrines a Śiva-*liṅga*, but the syncretistic Hari-Hara implies the communium between Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism at Mārkaṇḍī.

The icon is shown standing in *dvibhaṅga*. It has four hands. The upper right has a *cakra* (wheel), the lower right holds a *gadā* (club), whereas the upper left holds a *khaṭvāṅga* and the lower hand rests on the *gadā*, held in right hand. The god wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and has beard and moustache (which is rather unusual for the Viṣṇu element). Besides the usual ornaments, the god wears heavy globule-like ear-ornament in both the ears.

(6) *Bhūta* (Pl. XXIX, No. 3) :

The category of minor or demi-gods in Hindu mythology comprises, according to Rao,[21] Vasus, Nāgas and Nāgīs, Sādhyas, Asuras and Apsarās.

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The *Bhūtas* comprise the *Piśācas* and *Vetālas*. RAO points out that in the case of the former, "their images are required to be represented as of extremely emaciated appearance with the knobs of the bones jutting out and the veins visible under the surface of the skin; they must be composed of the bones, tendons and skin only. The hair on their head should be stiff and spread out".[22]

The depiction of the *Bhūta* (Pl. XXIX, No. 3) in Register No. 2, on the south face of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple answers to this description.

REFERENCES :

1. Andhakāsuravadhamūrti occurs on the southern facade of Kandariyā Mahādeva Temple at Khajuraho.
2. It may be stated here that the head and part of neck and chest portion are badly mutilated. The author suspects that the figure might be of a *kāpālī*, if the protrudence which appears on the left part of the chest represents the breast.
3. Awasthi, *Khajurāho kī Devapratimāye*, Fig. Nos. 12-13.
4. For parallel from Khajuraho, Awasthi, *op. cit.*, Pl. 31.
5. Awasthi refers to the find of such (Pl. XXIII, No. 3) icons of Vilakṣaṇa Sadāśiva at Khajurāho; *See* also Krishna Deva, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
6. *Ibid.*, Pl. 79-80.
7. *op. cit.*, p. 61; Dr. Awasthi has kindly sent a copy of the photograph which shows six heads arranged in three tiers, the lowermost having three, the middle one two and the topmost, one head.
8. Awasthi, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
9. For Yama depictions at Khajuraho, *See* Awasthi, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-219.
10. *See* Awasthi, *op. cit.*, p. 234; cf. Pramod Chandra, *Stone Sclupture in the Allahabad Museum*, Pl. CVIII, No. 319 (12th cent. A. D.).
11. For Khajuraho parallel, *See* K. Deva, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
12. Awasthi, *op. cit.*, Nos. 92 and 93.
13. *op. cit.*, p. 529; Pl. CLIV, Fig. 2.
14. Awasthi, *op. cit.*, No. 93.
15. Krishna Deva, *Anc. Ind.*, No. 15, p. 61.
16. The female figure No. 1 (Pl. XXVIII) is a separate panel.
17. Awasthi, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
18. *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 548-553.
19. For a comparable depiction from Jamsot, Allahabad District, U. P. of 12th cent. A. D., *See* Pramod Chandra, *Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum*, Pl. CVIII, No. 325.
20. Awasthi, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
21. *op. cit.*, p. 548.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 562.

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IX APSARĀS OR SURASUNDARĪS

Apart from the icons dealt with so far, the non-religious sculptures are by far the most elegant so far as the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple is concerned. These mostly comprise the *Apsarās* or *Surasundarīs* who are supposed to have "sprung from the waters when the ocean was churned for obtaining ambrosia. They are believed to be celestial nymphs ..... In sculpturing the images of the *apsarās* they should be represented as having slender waists, large gluteals and well developed busts. They should all look very pretty with a smiling countenance and adorned with all ornaments and draped in silk garments".[1]

The *Surasundarīs* at Mārkaṇḍī practically fulfil the classical requirements. But in addition, they remind one at once of Khajuraho[2] where they "are portrayed to express common human moods, emotions and activities and are often difficult to distinguish from conventional *nāyikās*. Such are the *apsarases* shown as disrobing, yawning, scratching the back, touching the breasts, rinsing water from the wet plaits of hair, removing thorn, fondling a baby, playing with pets like parrots and monkeys, writing a letter, playing on a flute or *vīṇā*, painting designs on the walls or bedecking themselves in various ways by painting the feet, applying collyrium, etc." It may be noted that all these motifs find their depiction at Mārkaṇḍī.

However, the female form at Khajuraho is much more appealing than at Mārkaṇḍī where the figures are rather less slender and hence less lyrical. Whereas the female figures at Khajuraho[3] are "enchanting lyrics of modelled beauty", "vaunting their voluptous charms in an infinite variety of lovely attitudes and postures" distinguished by "coquettish langour and a frankly erotic suggestion", the *Surasundarīs* of Mārkaṇḍī are more sobre and somewhat relatively more rigid. The erotic element, frankly apparent at Khajuraho, is practically absent at Mārkaṇḍī. However, inspite of this, so far as the region of Vidarbha is concerned, the Mārkaṇḍī *Surasundarīs* present, as at Khajuraho, "a veritable gallery of female types".

The Mārkaṇḍī *apsarās*, as stated earlier, are profusely ornamented in accordance with the sculptural dictum. They wear a variety of head ornaments, ear-rings, necklaces, armlets and bangles, girdles and leg ornaments. So far as the elegance of the physique is concerned, they are too much plump. That refined urbanity is rather lacking in them. The rounded face, plump cheeks, thick lower lip, rather broad nose, rigid neck,

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short foreheads, and outsize breasts make them representatives of contented, simple and robust specimens of rural beauties. With their heavy physique, one hardly expects them to display a lyrical flexion of the body. Inspite of various postures, they seem to stick to the walls.

The *Surasundarīs*, solely associated with the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, are concentrated mostly in Registers 1 and 2. They are also shown in various activities, and as such, can be grouped as under :

(1) Standing with a *ghaṭa* supported by the left hand (Pl. XXXI, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4).

(2) Standing languidly with coquettish suggestion (Pl. XXXII, Nos. 1,2,3).

(3) Standing or playing with pet birds like a parrot (Pl. XXXIII, Nos. 1, 2; XXXIV, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4; XLV, No. 4).

(4) Fondling a baby[4] (*putravallabhā*) (Pl. XXXIII, No. 3; Pl. XXXIX, No. 4).

(5) Tying an anklet (Pl. XXXV, No. 1, 3, 4; Pl. XLV, No. 3).

(6) Ladies at toilet with or without a mirror (*darpaṇa*), adjusting the hairdo or hair-ornaments, or applying collyrium to the eyes[5] (Pl. XXXVI, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4).

(7) Ladies playing upon some musical instruments like a flute, a *vīṇā* or cymbals (Pl. XXXVII, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Pl. XXXIX, No. 2).

(8) Dancing (*nṛityamagnā*) to the beat of a *mṛdaṅga*[6] (Pl. XXXVIII, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Pl. XXXIX, No. 1–Rt.; Pl. XLII, No. 1, 3; Pl. XLIII, No. 1, 4).

(9) Ladies with bow-and-arrow, as huntresses (Pl. XXXIX, No. 1–Left; Pl. XLIV, No. 1).

(10) Ladies being disrobed by monkeys (*vivṛitajaghanā*) (Pl. XXV, No. 2; Pl. XL, No. 1; Pl. XLI, No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

(11) Practising some penance (Pl. XXXII, No. 4). (The lady wears very few ornaments and her hair are arranged like *jaṭās*).

(12) Ladies holding a bunch of mangoes (Pl. XL, No. 2. 3. 5).

(13) Rinsing the wet plait of hair[7] or "*Karpūramañjarī*" (Pl. XLII, No. 2).

(14) Holding a flywhisk (*cāmaradhāriṇī*) (Pl. XLIII, No. 2, 3).

(15) Lady removing a thorn from her leg[8] (Pl. XLIV, No. 2).

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(16) Writing a letter (Pl. XLIV, No. 3).

(17) Playing with a ball (*kandūka*)[9] (Pl. XLIV, No. 3).

and (18) Standing in *tribhaṅga* under a mango tree (Pl. XL, No. 4).

Whereas as a rule, the *Surasundarīs* are shown to wear a diaphanous garment, in most cases the suggestion of nudity is totally absent, save in the case of those illustrated in Pl. XLI wherein the ladies are shown being disrobed by monkeys. Here their nudity is obvious and expressions more lyrical, having a pleasant mixture of shame, surprise and false coquettish anger.

Two of the *Surasundarīs* are noteworthy. The one illustrated in Pl. XLI, No. 2 is shown to hold a semi-circular basket (also Pl. XXXIX, No. 3) tied with the help of strings to a curved stick. That depicted in Pl. XLI, No. 5 is shown wearing a diaphanous garment which she seems to be hastily bunching off due to the detection of a scorpion on her right thigh.

REFERENCES :

1. Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 561.
2. K. Deva, *Anc. Ind.*, No. 15, pp. 63-64.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Zannas, E., *Khajuraho*, Pl. CLXXII.
5. *Ibid.*, Pl. CLXXIII.
6. cf. K. Deva, *op. cit.*, Pl. XLI, XLII.
7. Zannas, E., *Khajuraho*, Pl. XLII, XCV.
8. K. Deva, *op. cit.*, Pl. XLI, A; Zannas, E., *op. cit.*, Pl. XLVIII; CLXIII.
9. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXIX, B.

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X SECULAR MALE SCULPTURES

A few secular sculptures are also met with in the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and in its precincts. However, they are very few in number.

Pl. XLVIII, No. 1, illustrates a *mṛidaṅgin* or a person playing upon a drum. He has beard and moustache, and he wears a chain-like necklace and armlets. He has put on disc-ear-rings and is shown to have arranged his hair in a chignon. The *mṛidaṅga* he plays upon is rather of a small size *ḍamaru*-shape and has two faces.

The delineation of two ascetics is noteworthy. The one in Pl. XLVIII, No. 2 is shown to carry a *kamaṇḍalu* in his left hand and wears nothing except a *kaṭisūtra* which keeps the *kaupīna* in position.

The one shown in Pl. XLIX, No. 4, could be a *ṛiṣi* in a standing posture wearing a multi-stringed *yajñopavīta*, a turban on the head, and holding probably a *pothī* in his left hand. He has a beard going upto his chest and he wears a *kaupīna* kept in position possibly by a *kaṭisūtra*.

Pl. XLVIII, No. 3 depicts possibly a *tāpasa* standing in *namaskāra-mudrā*, who has kept his *jaṭās* in position with the help of ribbons. The figure more probably represents a devotee in *namaskāra-mudrā* wearing an *uttarīya* and a turban.

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XI

THE VYĀLAS

Like the *apsarās* or *devāṅganās*, the main temple of Mārkaṇḍī abounds in *Vyālas* which, according to DHAKY, are also termed as *varāla*, *virāla* and *virālikas*. As at Khajuraho, a spectacular variety of *Vyālas* can be seen on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple.

The *Vyālas* are fabulous animals principally bearing a horned face of a lion. The faces, however, differ, as will be seen below. At Mārkaṇḍī these are depicted mostly on the *jaṅghā* portion in all the three registers. However, whereas other figure sculptures appear on the projected members, the *Vyālas* are delineated on the recesses of the *jaṅghā*.

DHAKY traces the antiquity of the motif and the concept underlying it to Achaemian ancestry. He points out that the "Indian *Vyāla* by Gupta age, drifted decisively from some of the obligations of the original formulae; the wings were the first to be discarded ..... By the beginning of the Medieval period (by) the genius of the Indian sculptor.....the borrowal, unmistakably alien, un-Indian, grew acclimatized and now became a cherished, beautiful, indissociable possession among the decoration treasures of the Indian temples[1]....." The *Vyālas*, alien though in origin, "cling tenaciously to the walls of medieval Indian temples."[2]

As at Khajuraho, the *Vyālas* at Mārkaṇḍī present a colourful variety. It appears that the typology of the *Vyālas* here is much more varied than that at Khajuraho. They are also shown in a range of moods. As DHAKY so graphically describes, "The *Vyālas*, now looking placidly complacent, now virile and vigilant, vicious, mischievous, even belligerent, betray their powers with a reptile-like agility : they gallop, prance, whirl, swirl in sharp but swift and most animate contortions; their protuding tongue and tusks, short cunning ears, bulging bellicose eyes, and fierce, terrifying demeanour class them among the bizarre, phantsmagorical creations of human imagination."[3]

The *Vyāla* depictions on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple may be classified into the following categories :

(1) *meṣa-vyāla* (Ram-headed) : Pl. XLIX, No. 1; Pl. LI, No. 8.

(2) *aja-vyāla* (Goat-headed) : Pl. XLIX, No. 2; Pl. LI, No. 1.

(3) *gaṇḍa-vyāla* (rhino-headed) : Pl. XLIX, No. 3.

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(4) *gaja-vyāla* (elephant-headed) : Pl. L, Nos. 1–5, 7–8.

(5) *Gaṇeśa-vyāla* (Gaṇeśa-headed) : Pl. L, No. 6.

(6) *mārjāra-vyāla* (Cat-headed) : Pl. LI, No. 2.

(7) *aśva-vyāla* (Horse-headed) : Pl. LI, No. 3.

(8) *siṁha-vyāla* (Lion-headed) : Pl. LI, Nos. 4, 6.

(9) *puruṣa-vyāla* (Man-headed) : Pl. LI, No. 5.

(10) *śuka-vyāla* (Parrot-headed) : Pl. LI, No. 7.

(11) *Śiṁśumāra vyāla* : Pl. LII, No. 3.

(12) Miscellaneous : Pl. LII, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5.

There are several other fabulous categories which cannot be specifically identified. Some of the *vyālas* are associated with warriors (Pl. XLIX, No. 1; L, No. 7), and riders (Pl. LII, No. 2; Pl. L, No. 4), while some are shown on top of elephants (Pl. L, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5; Pl. LII, Nos. 1, 4, 5). The *Śuka-vyāla* (Parrot-headed) is shown holding playfully in its beak a bunch of mangoes (Pl. LI, No. 7)

REFERENCES :

1. *The Vyāla Figures on the Medieval Temples of India*, p. 15.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 14; for distribution, pp. 12ff.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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XII MISCELLANEOUS SCULPTURES

Apart from the *jaṅghā*, the *śukanāsā* portion of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple bears exquisite sculptured friezes (Pl. IX) and individual sculptures. The latter comprise flying *gandharvas*, female dancers and monkeys in different acts.

(*a*) *Sculptures on the Śukanāsā* (Pl. IX) :

The central panel of the *Śukanāsā*, facing east, shows *āliṅgana-murti* of Umā-Maheśvara. Śiva is shown holding a trident and a serpent, whereas his third hand in *abhaya* and fourth passes around Umā. Their respective *vāhanas*, *Nandi* and *Siṁha*, are shown near their feet.

The *śukanāsā* is further embellished by geometrical and floral motifs as also by friezes of geese and panels of fighting scenes. The latter are very graphically depicted. For instance, elephant-riders – possibly a king and a queen – followed by well-equipped warriors with sword and shield, riding another elephant, can be seen in Pl. LIII, No. 1. The next illustration depicts fight between a cavalryman and an elephant-rider.

The galloping pose of the horse is very graphically shown. Fight between two cavalrymen is shown in No. 3. The horses seem to trample a dead warrior whose bowels have come out and whose horse is shown crumbling in death agony.

(*b*) *Stray Sculptures* :

The temple precincts abound in stray sculptures which do not seem to belong to the main temple as some of the scenes pertain to the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* story, whereas some others are secular and some Śiva episodes.

(*i*) *Śiva-Pārvatī* (Pl. XVI, No. 2) : This is a stray sculpture not connected with the temple and has been kept along with other fragmentary sculptures.

Stylistically, the sculpture represents a different idiom as is clear from the hair style depicted in the case of Pārvatī and the female attendant to the right of the former. This arrangement of hair is not to be met with in any figure sculpture associated with the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, but has parallels from the Aurangabad[1] cave sculptures datable to 8th–9th century A. D.

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The panel depicts Śiva seated in *savyalalitāsana* with his right leg resting on a footrest. The god is seated on a decorated pedestal and is four-armed. The upper right holds an indeterminate object and the lower right is *kaṭihasta*; the upper left holds a *paraśu* and the lower left is broken. Śiva wears a high tapering *mukuṭa* with *jaṭās* flowing out on either shoulder. He has his left leg bent at the knee and planted firmly. He wears a few ornaments like armlet, wristlet, necklace, girdle and a long *yajñopavīta*.

Pārvatī is seated on a small *chārpaī*. In between Śiva and Pārvatī is the Nandī. Pārvatī has her left leg folded, her right arm straightened and resting on her left knee, and her left arm folded. She has a curly hairdo centrally adorned by a circular crest. She wears disc ear-rings, bangles, a girdle of double row, a *channavīra* and anklets. There is a foot-rest below the *chārpaī*.

The female attendant standing behind, close to right of Pārvatī, has also a similar hairdo. At the back of Pārvatī is shown the figure of a bird, possibly a bat or an owl which is rather unusual.

The pose of Pārvatī is reminiscent of the one depicted in the Rāmeśvara Cave at Ellora which shows Pārvatī playing dice with Śiva. The slenderness and suppleness of the body and hairdo suggest that the sculpture could probably be placed earlier than the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple sculptures.

(*ii*) *Śiva Mahākāla* (?) (Pl. XVIII, No. 1) : This seems to depict possibly Śiva as *Mahākāla*. The lower and the left portion of the figure is mutilated. It is a loose sculpture.

The god is shown standing, holding *kapāla* (skull-cup) and *ḍamaru* in his right hands. He wears a *jaṭā-mukuṭa* and *sarpa-hāra*. He has a terrible look, outsize wide open eyes and gaping mouth showing terrible teeth.

His female consort, standing to his right, wears a tapering crown with triangular plaques and has placed her right hand on the right thigh and holds a *ghaṭa* in her uplifted left hand.

(*iii*) *Rāvaṇa* (Pl. XLIX, No. 5) : A broken panel depicting ten-headed Rāvaṇa is at present kept in the *garbha-gṛiha* of the small Hanumān temple to the south of Mārkaṇḍeśvara or Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. The image is worn out and carved out of a porous blackish-grey stone. It shows Rāvaṇa preparing for an attack, with his hands holding a sword and a shield and two other hands holding a trident horizontally above the heads. The ass-head is just right over the main central head[2]. A similar depiction can be seen in Pl. XLVI, No. 4.

(*A*) *Rāmāyaṇa Scenes*

A few panels depicting incidents from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are also available.

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(a) *Vālī-Sugrīva Battle* : Pl. XLV, No. 1 depicts the war between Vālī and Sugrīva. Rāma is shown going to the help of Sugrīva and has shot an arrow in the chest of Vālī. Lakṣmaṇa is shown standing behind Rāma. This episode is well-known in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[3] The leadership of Hanumān is depicted[4] with full gusto in Pl. XLVI, No. 2.

(*b*) *Sītā enamoured of the Golden Deer* : The scene depicted in Pl. XLVII, No. 1 can possibly be interpreted as one in which Sītā is shown attracted by the golden deer (*kāñcana mṛiga*). In this panel, Sītā is shown seated on a seat urging with her right hand Rāma to fetch the golden deer shown close to the right of Rāma. The distinctive nature of the deer is emphasised with decorative circles incised over its body.

(*c*) *Rāma killing the Golden Deer* : The killing of the *kāñcana mṛiga* is depicted in Pl. XLVI, No. 4 (left). The killed deer-head is shown lying on the ground, with Rāma having his quiver at the back.

At the killing, the deer gave a false alarm in the voice of Rāma. On hearing this, Lakṣmaṇa is urged to go in search of Rāma by Sītā. This is depicted in the right half of the panel.

(*d*) *Rāvaṇa visiting Sītā as an ascetic* : This incident is shown in Pl. XLVI, No. 4 (right). Rāvaṇa wears a garland of skulls (*muṇḍa-mālā*) and Sītā is seen offering alms to the ascetic-Rāvaṇa with a ladle. Immediately after getting the alms, the ascetic attains his original form of ten-headed Rāvaṇa. Over the nine heads, in the centre, is shown the head of an ass as in Pl. XLIX, No. 5 referred to earlier.

(e) *The killing of Jaṭāyu* (Pl. XLV, No. 2) : The panel shows Rāvaṇa piercing his spade. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are shown (at the right) looking at the injured Jaṭāyu who is shown at the feet of Rāma.

(*f*) *The Crowning Ceremony of Rāma* : The *Rāmarājyābhiṣeka* after Rāma's victorious return to Ayodhyā with Sītā is shown in Pl. XLVII, No. 2. Rāma and Sītā are shown seated on a seat, and possibly Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata with Hanumān are shown holding the *chattra* (royal umbrella) over the head of Rāma and Sītā.

(*B*) *Mahābhārata Scenes* :

(*a*) The fight between Bhīma and Duryodhana is probably the theme of the panel in Pl. XLVI, No. 1. The panel consists of two depictions, *viz*., one showing a fight with clubs between two warriors on the background of a lake; and the other showing one of them vanquished, with legs raised and the other hitting at his thighs. There is a four-armed spectator with his left hand resting on his club. The sequence meant here, is, probably as observed earlier, the famous Bhīma-Duryodhana fight with Kṛṣṇa as the spectator. The lake here represents the *samanta pañcakatīrtha*, the venue of the fight suggested by Balarāma who was also present there (*vide Mbh*. Śalya, 55). The

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spectator Kṛṣṇa's 4th arm is not visible in the sculpture but his identity is certain from the *śaṅkha* in his upper right hand. His presence in the panel was essential as it was at his suggestion that Duryodhana was killed, against the rules of the fight, with a hit at his thighs (*Mbh.* Śalya, 58-46).

(*b*) Pl. XLVI, No. 3, possibly depicts war between Arjuna and Karṇa. The panel is much mutilated. Arjuna is shown fighting with a gusto and in the act of taking out an arrow from the quiver at the back. The shower of arrows seems to have struck the horses of the chariot of Karṇa whose *ratha* seems to have stuck up.

(*c*) *An Unidentified Panel* : The scene depicted in Pl. XLVII, No. 3 is difficult to identify. It shows the figure of possibly an ascetic or a person performing a penance, cutting off his head with a sword for offering it to the *yajña-kuṇḍa* (fire-altar), in front. The man has tilted his head by catching his own hair. The cut part of his neck is clearly visible. The altar is ablaze with leaping flames. At the rear is shown possibly a tank of water indicated by the presence of a tortoise and a fish shown at either side of the person.

(*C*) *Secular Scene* :

Yet another stray panel depicts a warrior exhorting another one to join him to go on war (Pl. LV, No. 1). The easy-going person is shown reclining on his bed comfortably in his house. Below the bed are possibly kept wine jars. The other man, the warrior, well equipped with shield and sword, is exhorting him.

REFERENCES :

1. Ray, Amita, *Aurangabad Sculptures*, Pls. 11, 14, 16.

2. At Ellora also similar depiction with an ass's head capping the ten heads of Rāvaṇa occurs. According to the tradition when the dreadful demon Rāvaṇa was born, there were bad omens which included the shower of blood and thunder from clouds giving out the sounds of donkeys (*vavarṣa rudhiram devo meghaśca kharanissvanāḥ, Ramāyaṇa*, VII.9.31)

3. *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, 16.25.

4. For parallel from Kandariyā Temple, Khajuraho, *See* Awasthi, *op. cit.*, No. 37.

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XIII EROTIC SCULPTURES

Save a couple of specimens, the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple is practically devoid of erotic sculptures. This is a feature which is unlike the Śaiva temple sculptures at Khajuraho.

Pl. LIV, No. 1 shows a couple in erotic stance, the man touching the breast of the lady and the latter holding the phallus. The sculpture belongs to the third register on the south face of the temple.

No. 3 of the same Plate shows a nude lady exposing unashamedly her private parts. The depiction belongs to Register 3 on the east face.

Two other erotic depictions are available as stray sculptures. The one in Pl. LIV, No. 2 shows a naked man caressing a (she ?) donkey. Another stray sculpture, now housed in the corridors of the Daśāvatāra Temple, shows a naked couple in which the lady is shown sucking the phallus of the man.

It may, however, be noted that the erotic element is otherwise absent at Mārkaṇḍī.

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CUNNINGHAM, in his *Report*[1] *of the Tour in the Central Provinces in* 1873–74 *and* 1874–75, has referred to the stray inscriptions within the precincts of the temples as also those inscribed on the different parts of the main temple, i. e. of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi. After a lapse of about a century now, it is not possible to locate all these, especially that which he refers to as "a second square monolith with a moulded capital, inscribed on three faces." Of the three faces, only the middle portion is available now (Pl. LV, No. 3).

Besides these stray records, some parts of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple bear short inscriptions. It may be noted in this connection that some of the temples at Khajuraho also bear such short inscriptions.[2]

Yet another point to be noted is that the inscriptions seem to belong to different periods, as their palaeography shows.

CUNNINGHAM, has given eye copies of seven inscriptions from Mārkaṇḍī, of which three[3] are associated with the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple and one[4] with the Mṛityuñjaya Temple. The remaining three are unconnected with the temples. It may be noted that No. 1 and 2 are in Brāhmī script and the rest are in Devanāgarī. It is, therefore, apparent that there is no connection between these two groups. However, it may also be stated here that the Brāhmī records have nothing to do with any of the temples under study.

In addition to the records mentioned and reproduced by CUNNINGHAM, there are a few others (Pl. LVI) which are short and inscribed on the *jaṅghā* portion of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple. A stray stone, at the rear of the same temple, bears a fragmentary inscription in Brāhmī.

Those referred to by CUNNINGHAM are as follows :

Inscription No. 1 (Cunningham, *ASI*, Vol. IX, Pl. XXX, No. 1; Our Pl. LV, No. 3 and LVI, No. 1) :

He refers to a square monolith with a moulded capital[5] inscribed on three faces. "Its characters are somewhat older than those of the other pillar, say of the sixth or seventh century. The two lines on the left face of the pillar apparently form a distinct

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record, of which the latter half of the second line is in much smaller characters. The main record begins at the top of the middle face with the words "*svasti śrī*". Several of the letters are rather doubtful."

Middle Face	*Right Face*
1. *svasti śrī samyidha*	1. *– bra –*
2. *jña chila badra chigi*	2. *– thu la –*
3. *posa dhi ha – he ma*	3. *nya dha di yaga*
4. *– budhi suchandra śishya*	4. *ma yi badi nga bra*
5. *nta chaitriyama suta*	5. *sata di – ba*

The record on the right face "has larger letters and has no connection with that on the middle face." CUNNINGHAM has not given the reading of the left face.

It may be mentioned here that the records on the left and the right face were not traceable during the period of this study. What is now available is the middle portion (Pl. LV, No. 3) with the upper parts – mouldings – now not extant.

Inscription No. 2 (Pl. LVI, No. 2) :

CUNNINGHAM has illustrated this in Pl. XXX, No. 2. It consists of only three letters deciphered by him as "*prayasrī.*" He further states that this is inscribed on an old square monolith, and that it "palaeographically cannot be later than 5th–6th century A. D." Below the letters is a male figure with four arms, carrying a battle-axe, and attended by two females. A snake encircles his waist, which may perhaps serve to identify the figure with Śiva.[6]

This record is also not traceable now.

Inscription No. 3 (Pl. LVI, No. 3) :

On the jamb of the southern door of the enclosure wall, CUNNINGHAM noticed this.[7] The record is in Devanāgarī and reads :

1. *Magaradhvaja*
2. *Jogī* 700

He further adds that "700 is probably intended for the date of his visit..... Since the letters are late, 700 does not belong either to Vikrama or Śaka Era..... Palaeographically, the record may be assigned to c. A. D. 1000. If it refers to Chedi Saṁvat, then the date could be c. 950 A. D."

Inscription No. 4 (Pl. LVI, No. 5) :

This is a one line record[8] appearing on the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple according to CUNNINGHAM. It reads :

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Gadyāṇa 11 *saṁgit(e* ?)

It probably refers to the donation of eleven *gadyāṇas* for the purpose of playing music to the deity.

Inscription No. 5 (Pl. LVI, No. 6) :

This again is a short record from the same temple.[9] It reads :

Thāsarāsi Tapodhana

It possibly mentions one Thāsarāsī "whose wealth was (his) penance."

Inscription No. 6 (Pl. LVI, No. 7) :

On the left jambs of the door of the Mṛtyuñjaya Temple,[10] occurs the following record :

Dhariṇi gaja	714	*Gaṁgā* 12
Bhabhu	314	*Gaṁgā* 60
.....	286	*Gaṁgā* 124
Etha gaja ta tu	1314	
Gaṁgā sampalana	196	

Below this line there is a rude sketch of a man's head, with the left arm holding a book.

CUNNINGHAM[11] points out that the total of both columns as given is correct. He further states that these might refer to "two different classes of offerings."

Inscription No. 7 (Pl. LVI, No. 8) :

This is referred to by CUNNINGHAM[12] as being on a rock face on the bank of the river Wainagaṅgā. This is not traceable now. His reading is as follows :

1. *Oṁ | | kaṇhāṣujraṣotmācā | gimastirāvārpana ge*
2. *upāṁga rāje tenācā tmaskānte* (?) *śrīmārkaṇḍeśvārā*
3. *trāja majasī saṁgītaguṇanīdhī*

The record is in Devanāgarī but the meaning is not clear. It begins with '*Oṁ*' and refers to Śrī Mārkaṇḍeśvara at the end of the second line. The ending word refers to '*saṁgītaguṇanidhī*' one who is the treasure of the art of singing. Palaeographically the record may be assigned to 12th cent. A. D.

New Inscriptions

As mentioned earlier, a few more records were noted during our study of the temples at Mārkaṇḍī. These have been neither recorded nor illustrated by CUNNINGHAM.

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As in the case of the earlier group, these six records can be divided into two categories :

(a) Brāhmī inscriptions,

and (b) Devanāgarī inscriptions.

Obviously these two groups are far removed from each other in terms of time and palaeography. Moreover, most of these are fragmentary and it is not possible to make sense out of these.

(*a*) *Brāhmī Records* :

(1) *Pl. LVII, No.* 1 : This is a two line record on a stray fragmentary stone now lying at the rear of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara Temple. The characters appear to be nail-headed variety of Brāhmī, datable to late 5th and early 6th cent. A. D.

1. *Anurāga — ya prabhu* (*?*)
2. *Baghanāgaśrī*

(2) *Pl. LVII, No.* 3 : This is a very short record of two letters. This is on a small fragmentary stone now deposited at the backside of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara Temple. It reads as follows :

1. *napa*

(*b*) *Devanāgarī Records* :

These are four in number and show well developed letters which can be assigned to 10th–12th cent. A. D.

(1) *Pl. LVII, No.* 2 : This record is inscribed on one of the mouldings on the west face of the main temple. It is as follows :

Saṁ 1519 *jeṭha vadi paṁca jogī ratanadhvaja*

The record possibly refers to the visit by one Yogī Ratnadhvaja on the 5th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyeṣṭha in the Saṁvat year 1519.

(2) *Pl. LVII, No.* 4 : This again is a single line inscription which, however, is much worn out. The initial two are numerals, one and seven, and the last two letters are possibly '*vīra*'. It is not possible to decipher the entire record. But palaeographically it can be assigned to 12th cent. A. D. or later.

(3) *Pl. LVII, No.* 5 : This is a two line inscription on the moulding on the west face of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara Temple. This again is much worn out.

1. *Jītānaṁdapāi sa.....na.....*
2. *ākuṭhite* (?) | | *pāṇam* | |

It is not possible to make any sense out of this.

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(4) *Pl. LVII, No. 6* : This one line record occurs on the moulding on the *jaṅghā* portion on the west face of the same temple.

1. *Lāṣa puṁsādu*

The meaning is not clear.

REFERENCES :

1. *ASI*, Vol. IX, Pl. XXX and pp. 146-150.
2. *See* Zannas, *op. cit.*, Pls. XLV, CI and CXI.
3. *ASI, AR.*, Vol. IX, Pl. XXX, Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 6
4. *Ibid.*, No. 7.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.
6. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 146; Pl. XXX, Fig. 3.
8. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXX, No. 5.
9. *Ibid.*, No. 6.
10. *Ibid.*, No. 7.
11. *Op. cit.*, p. 147.
12. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXX, No. 8.

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XV

EPILOGUE

The foregoing details of the group of temples bring out certain features which may be summarised now.

It appears that originally the site of Mārkaṇḍī must have been a centre of fairly reasonable sanctity situated as it is on the perennial stream of the Wainagaṅgā. A group of temples arose on its bank due, possibly, both to royal and popular patronage, which, however, remains unidentified.

Of the temple complex, the most noteworthy, of course, is the main temple termed as Mārkaṇḍeśvara or Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple, though the former appears to be the more correct nomenclature. The other temples appear to be minor shrines and later in construction.

From the nomenclature as well as the range of icons associated with the main temple, it is certain that the temple complex was essentially Śaivite. Though the main temple has a few icons of Viṣṇu and Sūrya, they are more an exception than the rule. Śiva-Pārvatī and various other forms of Śiva dominate the iconographical range.

The entire temple has suffered from reckless and unplanned renovations and unpleasant conservation, with the result that the internal features of the temple present a queer mixture of old, late and modern elements. However, the original pillars, the *śikhara*, the mouldings on the *adhiṣṭhāna*, the three registers of the sculptures on the *jaṅghā* and the style of the icons and sculptures make it possible to assign the temple of Mārkaṇḍeśvara to late 11th cent. A. D. or early 12th cent. A. D.

Though icons and sculptures of *Surasundarīs* abound and though they remind one of parallels from Khajuraho group of temples, it may also be noted that the lyrical excellence of Khajuraho is lacking at Mārkaṇḍī. The figures at Mārkaṇḍī are somewhat sluggish and relatively expressionless.[1] Inspite of this, Mārkaṇḍī temples, especially Mārkaṇḍeśvara, remain unparalleled in the region of Vidarbha. This is equally so in respect of the spectacular range of the *Vyālas* which are depicted in the *jālāntara* recesses of the *jaṅghā*.

Among the icons, some are worth note. For instance, the unique Sadāśiva icon, the syncretistic icons of Śiva-Brahmā-Skanda, Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha-Arka and

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Viṣṇu-Bhairava (Śiva) show the religious trends of the age. It may further be mentioned that these are to be found even at Khajuraho. Actually, the iconographical range at Mārkaṇḍī reminds one immediately of that at Khajuraho.

Similar is the case with the *Surasundarīs* and the *Vyālas*. Both these categories are reminiscent of Khajuraho, but the latter, in addition, seem to introduce new types as evidenced by the *Nara* or *Mānuṣa Vyāla* and the *Gaṇeśa Vyāla*.

It may also be mentioned that the erotic element is practically absent at Mārkaṇḍī. Frank eroticism may be taken to be a feature of Khajuraho tradition. Even the secular *mithunas* are more or less absent at Mārkaṇḍī.

It is obvious that the site had a fair antiquity. This is indicated by the Brāhmī inscriptions which can be dated much earlier than the temple itself. On the other hand, it appears that even after the execution of the temples, the place seems to have been visited by devotees, and the sculptural activity continued unabated. The former is attested by the Devanāgarī inscriptions on the different parts of the Mārkaṇḍeśvara Temple and those on other temples, and the gateway of the compound wall. The later sculptural activity is evidenced by the *Rāmayaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* panels as also the later icons of *Candra, Kaumārī*, etc.

The date of the main or the Mārkaṇḍeśvara Temple has to be relative for want of any contemporary epigraphical or other evidence as has been referred to earlier. CUNNINGHAM[2] is inclined to place it in the same period, i. e. 10th and 11th cent. A. D., on the basis of the similarity between Mārkaṇḍī and Khajuraho. We have proposed a date later in the 11th cent. A. D. on the basis of the obvious deterioration in the sculptural art of Mārkaṇḍī in comparison to Khajuraho. DHAKY[3] has also proposed the same date.

Inspite of this, there cannot be two opinions that the Mārkaṇḍī group of temples remains unexcelled in terms of sculptural art so far as the Vidarbha region of Mahārāṣṭra is concerned. With all the obvious limitations, it may aptly be termed "the Khajuraho of Vidarbha."

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1. "Some of the statues of Śiva are naked and so are some of the female statues; but they are simply naked figures without any suggestive indecency, such as is only too prominent in the obtrusive bestiality of the Khajuraho sculptures. The attitudes of the figures are generally easy, but there is invariably the same passionless expression in all the faces; and Śiva has just the calm features when he is caressing Pārvatī as when he is trampling the enemy to death." Cunningham, *ASI, Report*, Vol. IX, pp. 145-146.

2. *op. cit.*, p. 143.

3. *op. cit.*, p. 13.

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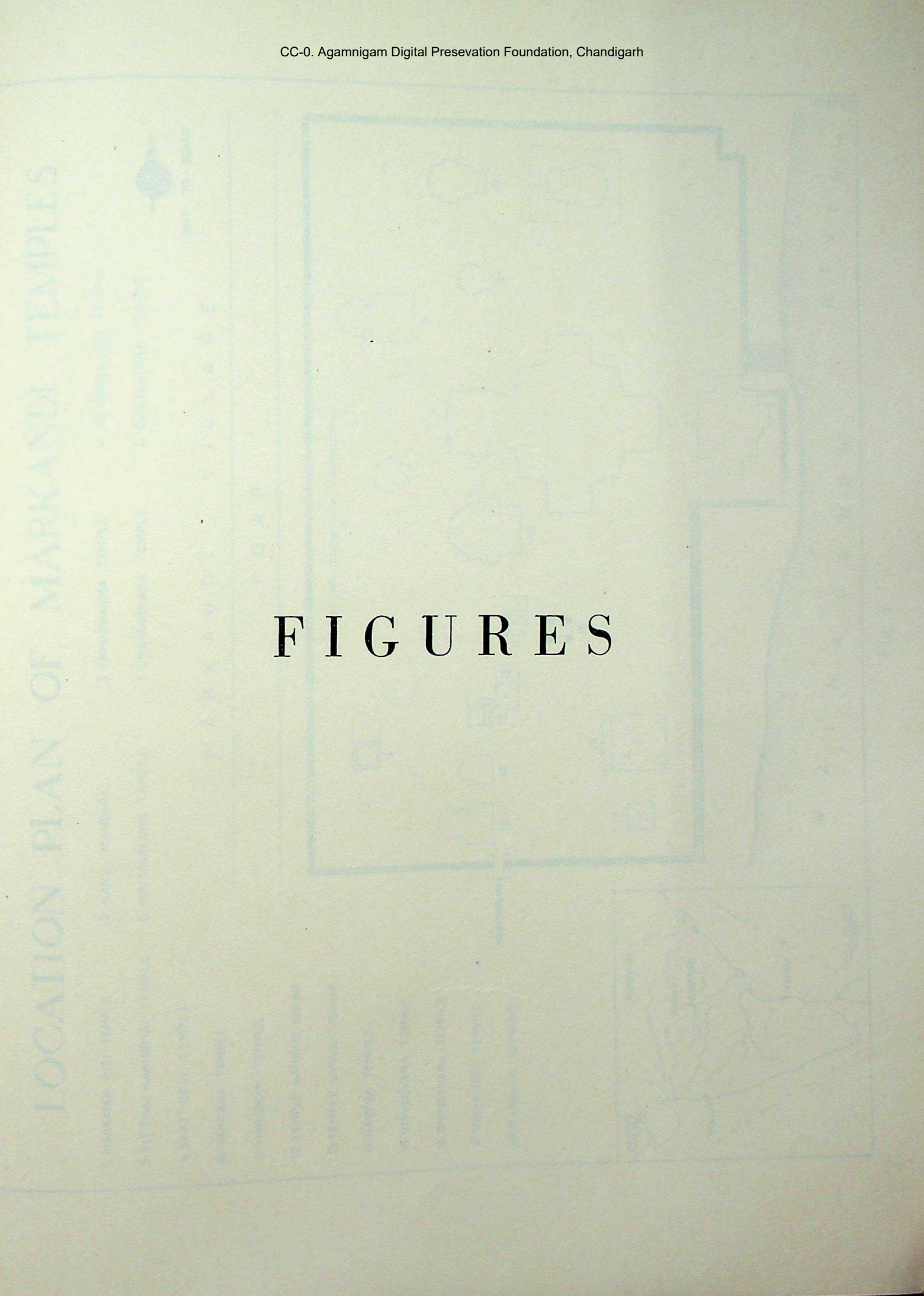

FIGURES

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FIGURES

LOCATION PLAN OF MĀRKAṆḌĪ TEMPLES

1 MĀRKAṆḌA ṚIṢI TEMPLE
2 NANDI MAṆḌAPA
3 YAMADHARMA TEMPLE
4 MṚIKAṆḌA ṚIṢI TEMPLE
5 VIṬṬHAL RAKHUMĀI TEMPLE
6 MṚITYUÑJAYA TEMPLE
7 UMĀ-ŚAṄKARA TEMPLE
8 DAŚĀVATĀRA TEMPLE
9 ŚAKTĪ DEVĪ TEMPLE
10 ŚAṄKARA TEMPLE
11 HANUMĀN TEMPLE
12 TEMPLE WITHOUT SHRINE
13 TEMPLE WITHOUT SHRINE
14 GAṆEŚA TEMPLE
15 VIŚVEŚVARA TEMPLE
16 BHĪMEŚVARA TEMPLE
17 VĪREŚVARA TEMPLE
18 MAṆḌAPA REMAINS

NOT TO SCALE

MĀRKAṆḌĪ VILLAGE

ROAD

MAIN ENTRANCE

WAINAGANGA RIVER

KHAJURAHO
NAGPUR
MARKANDI
BOMBAY
MADRAS
BAY OF BENGAL
ARABIAN SEA

P.S.JOSHI

Fig. 1

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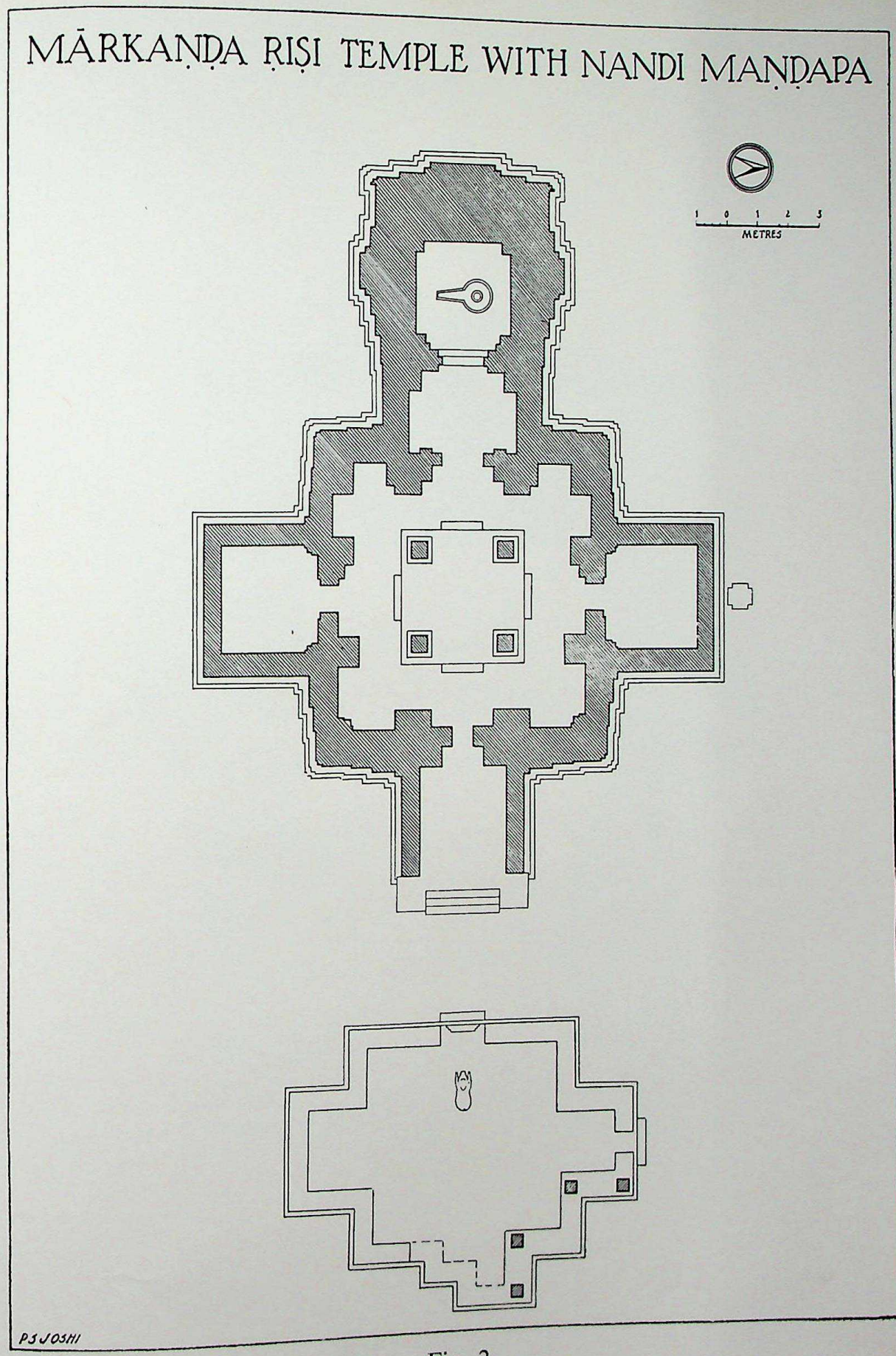

Fig. 2

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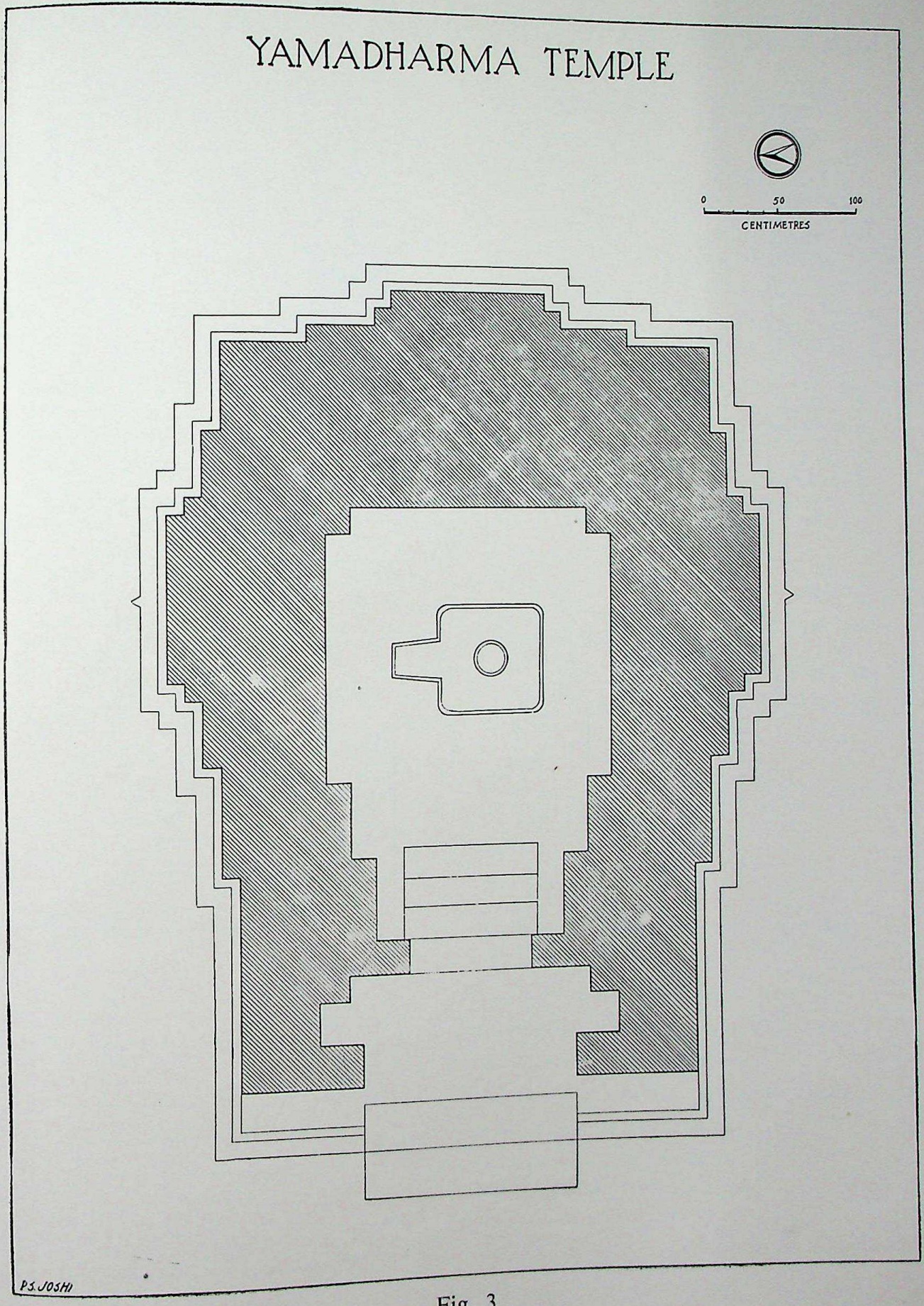

Fig. 3

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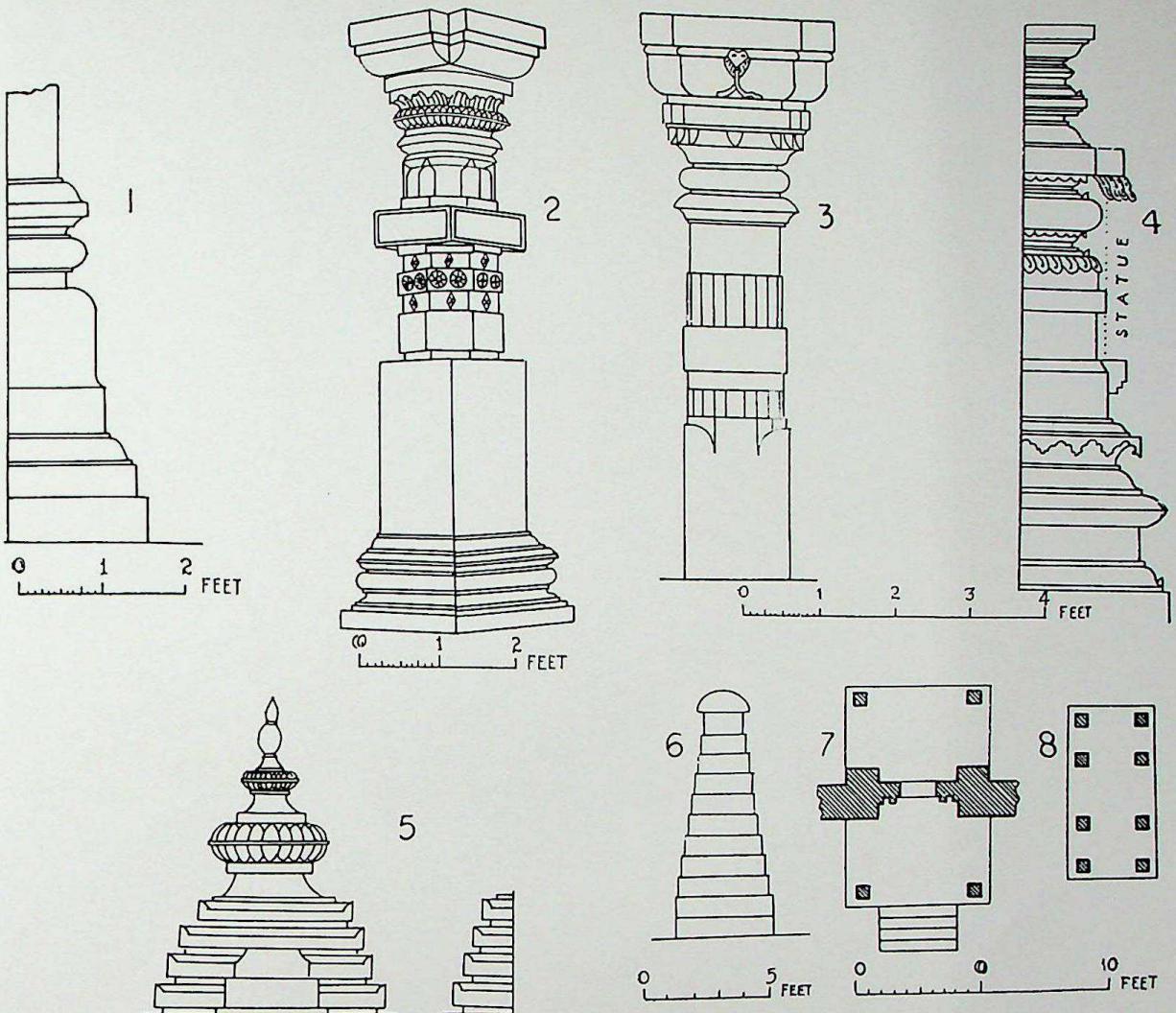
MOULDINGS, PILLARS, ELEVATION AND ENCLOSURE WALL



1. Basement Mouldimgs: Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple
2. Pillar;Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple
3. Pillar: Nandikeśwara Temple
4. Basement Mouldings:Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣi Temple
5. Elevation:Daśāvatāra Temple
6. Section,Enclosure Wall of temple complex
7. Gateway:Plan of Lower Storey
8. Gateway:Plan of Upper Storey
   (After Cunningham,ASI,Vol.IX)

Fig. 4

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PLATES

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. I 1 View of the group of Temples at Mārkaṇḍī (from West)
2 Group of temples at Mārkaṇḍī (from East)

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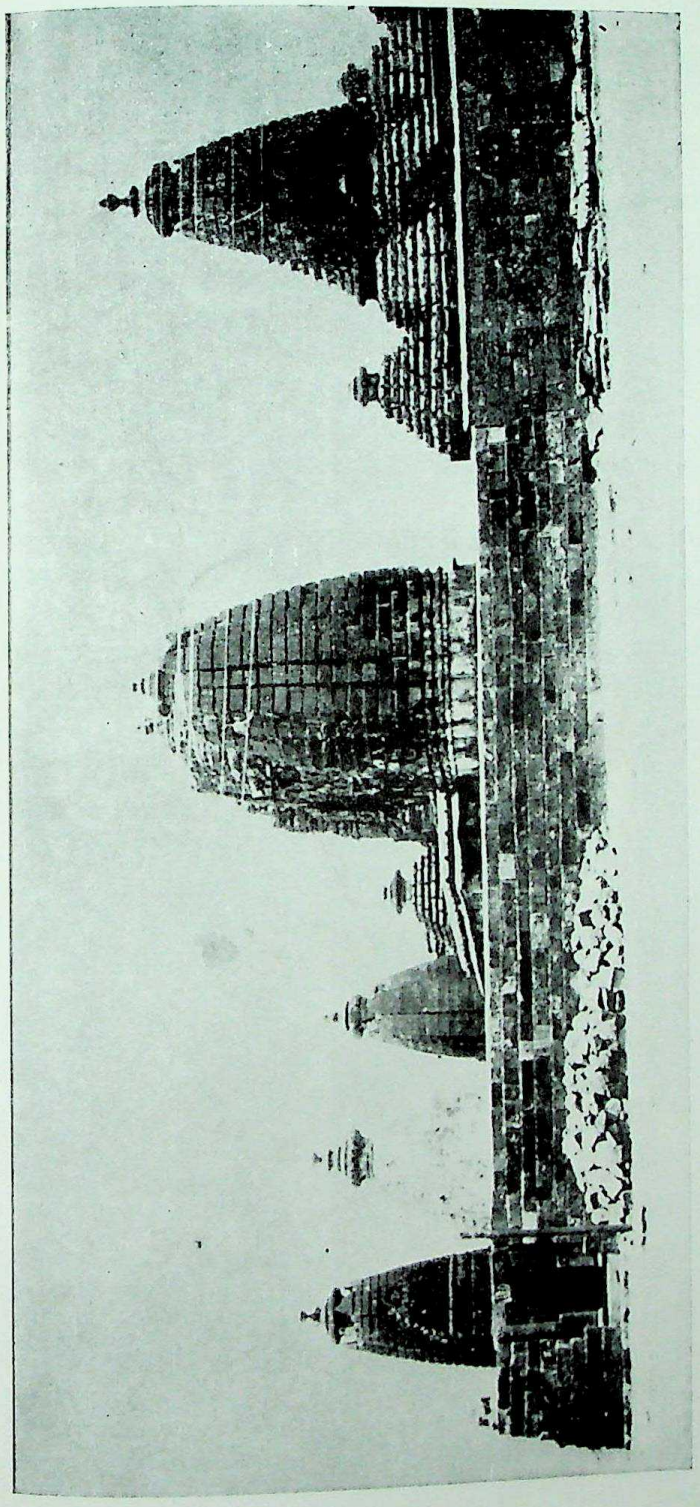
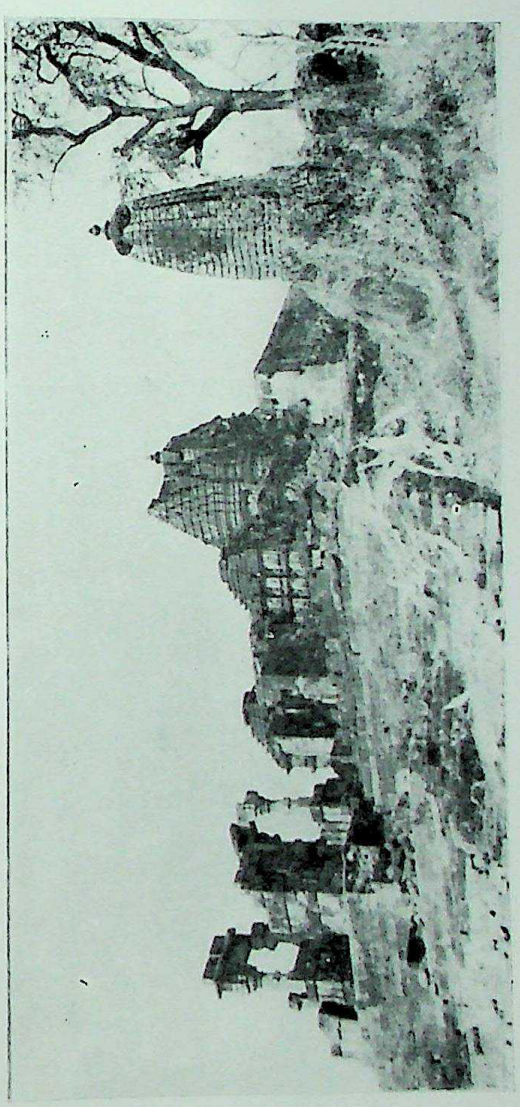
1





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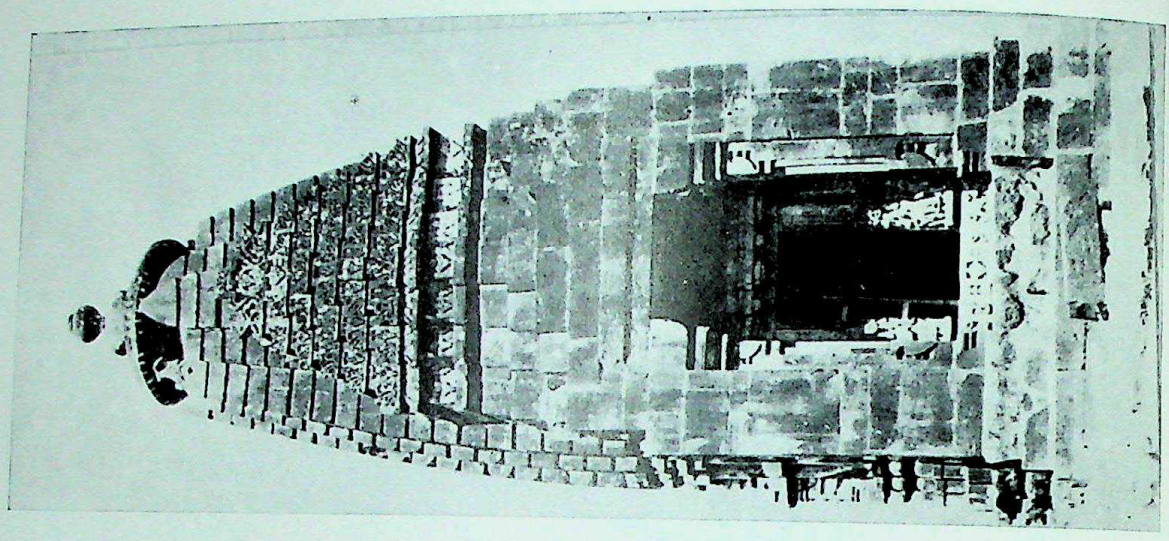
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. II



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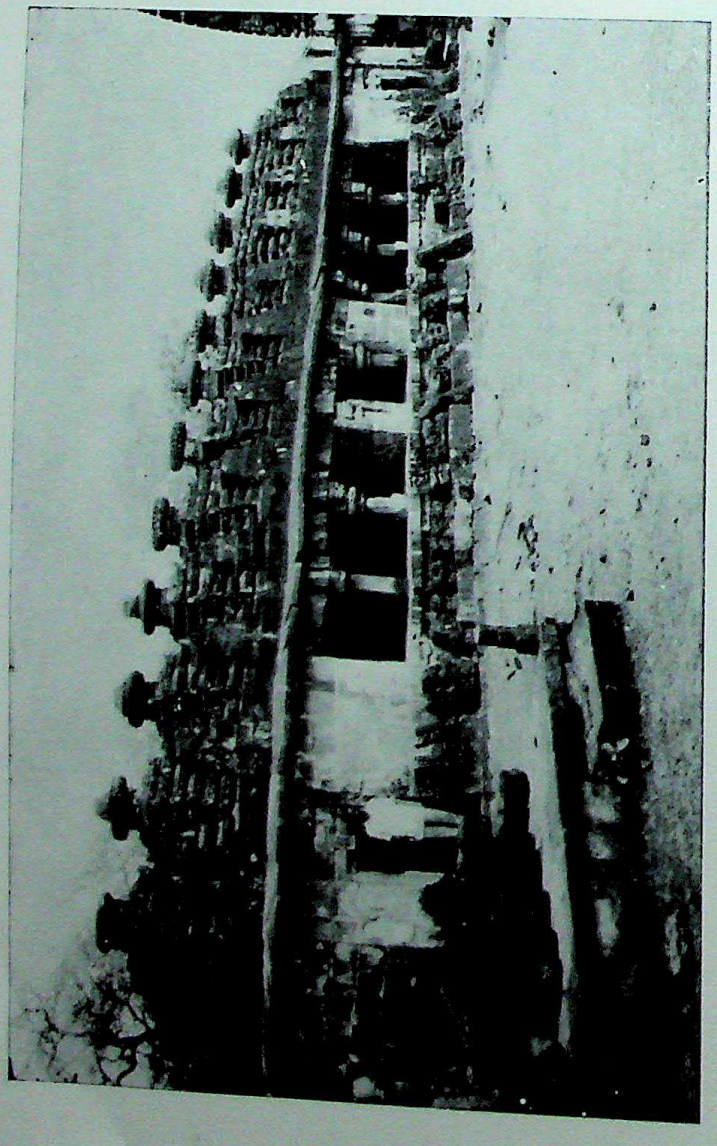

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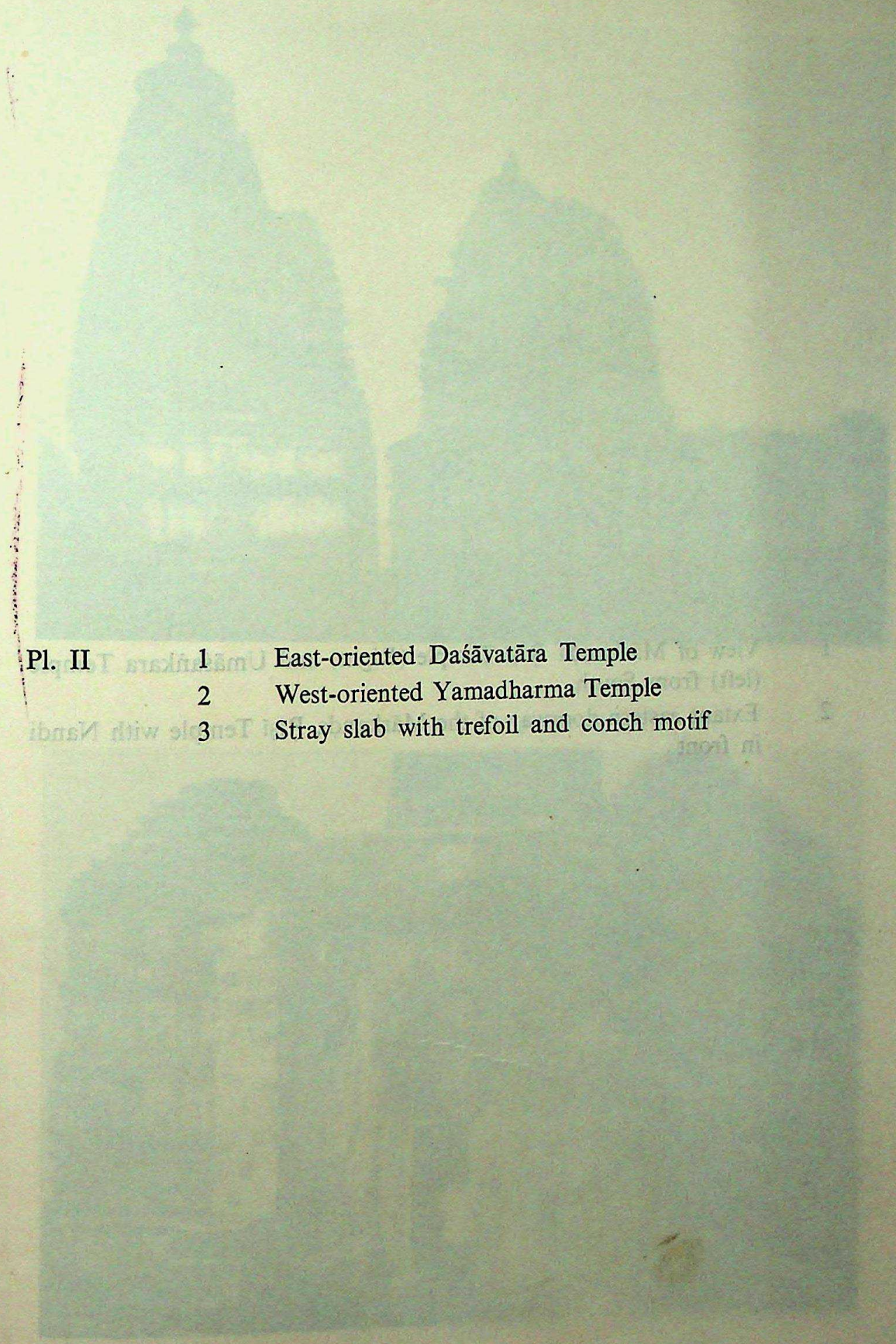
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



Pl. II 1 East-oriented Daśāvatāra Temple
2 West-oriented Yamadharma Temple
3 Stray slab with trefoil and conch motif

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Pl. III

1 View of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple (Right) and Umāśaṅkara Temple (left) from South

2 Extant eastern doorway of the Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple with Nandi in front

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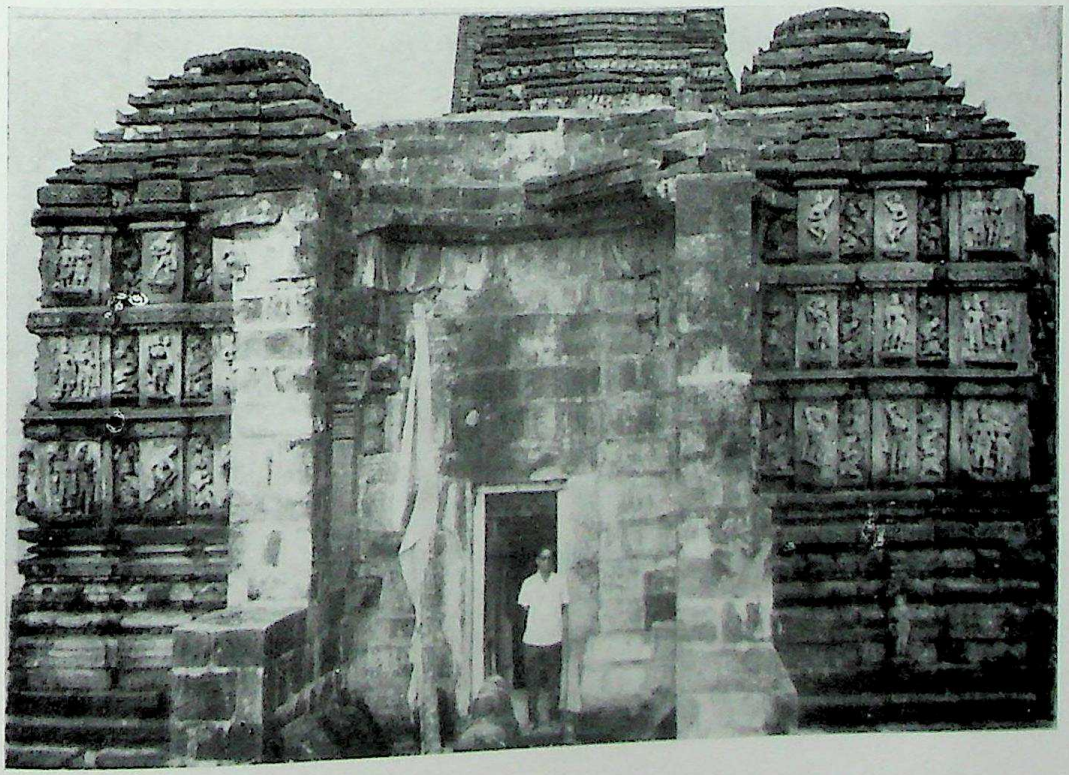
1



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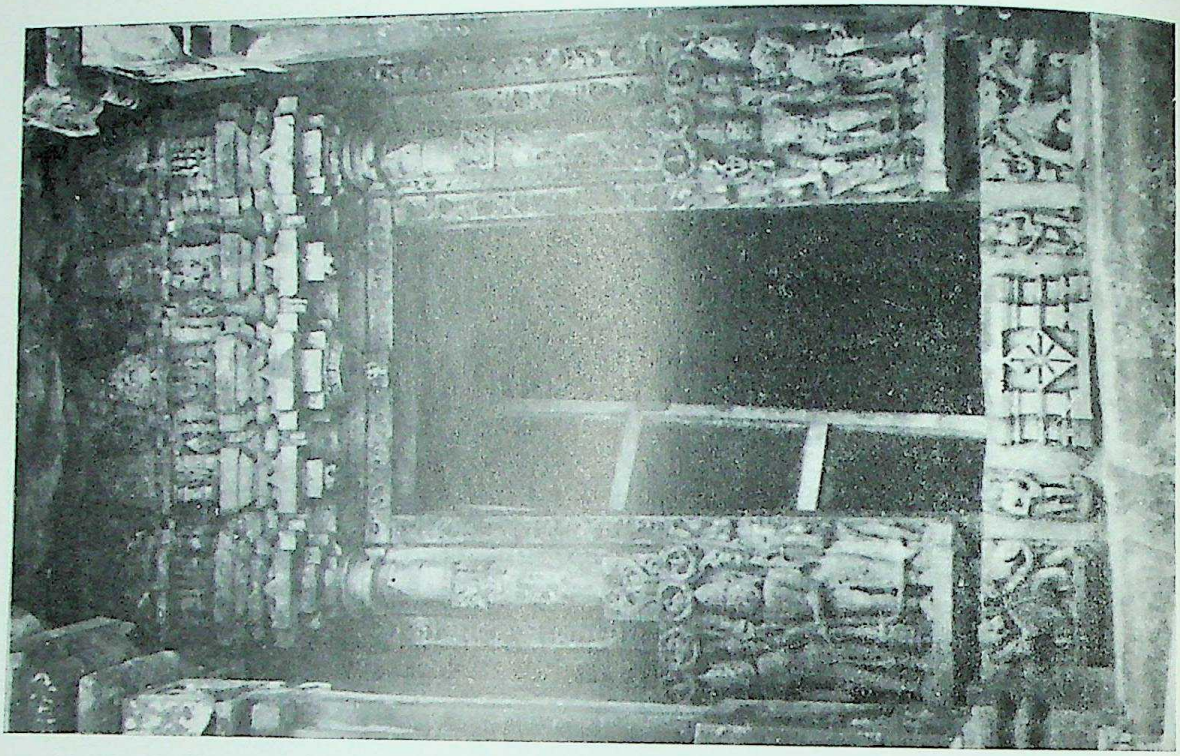
Pl. IV



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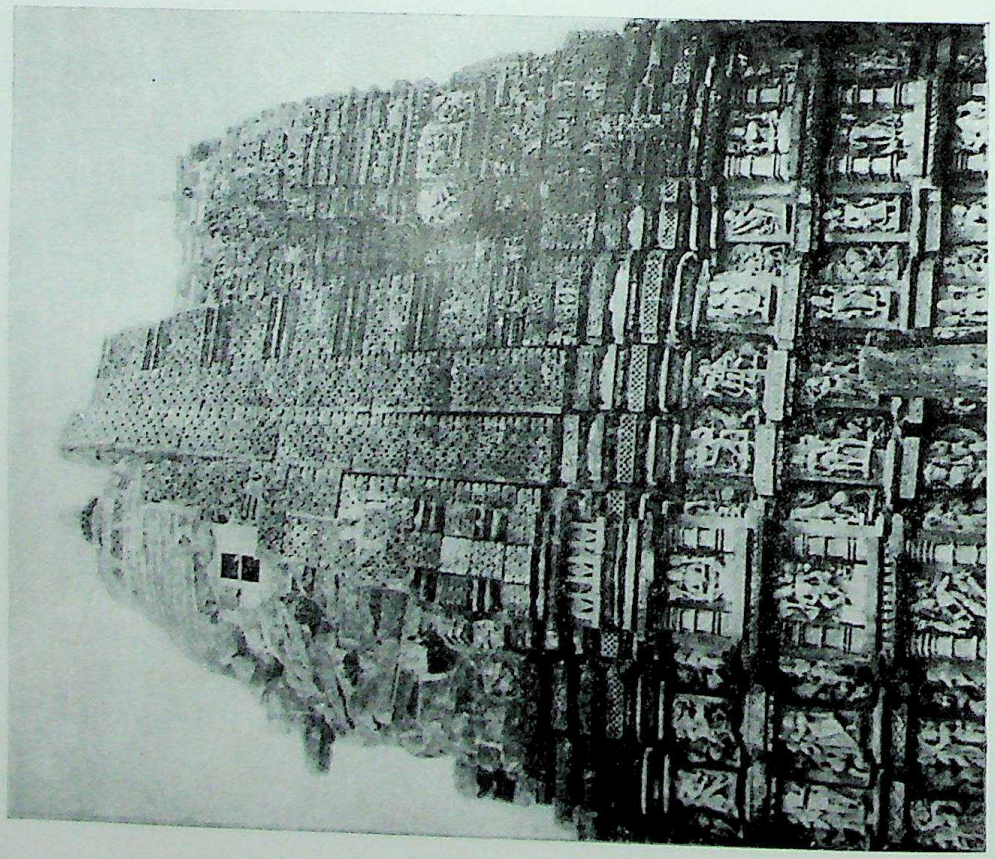

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Pl. IV 1 Registers of sculptures and śikhara of Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple (from South)

2 Doorway of Yamarāja Temple facing west

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Pl. V

1 Basement mouldings, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple (NW Corner)

2 Basement mouldings, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple (NE Corner), Apsarā below mango tree

3 Close up, Apsarā below a mango tree, basement of maṇḍapa to Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple (facing West)

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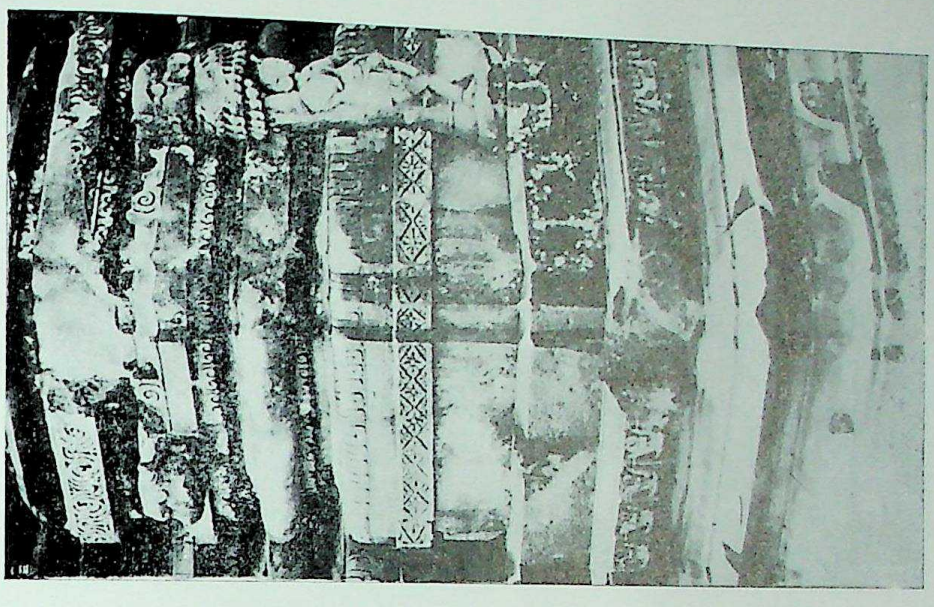
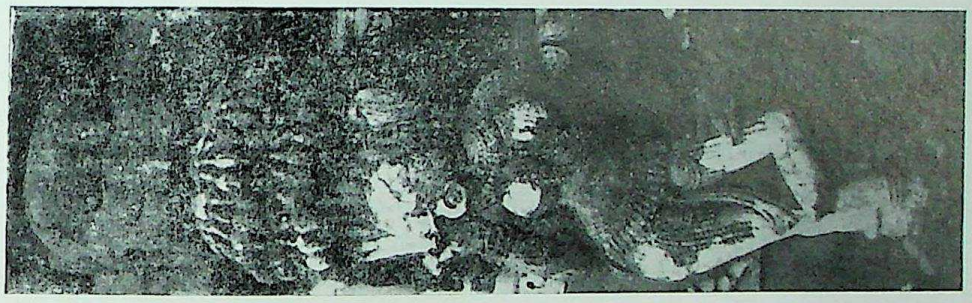
2





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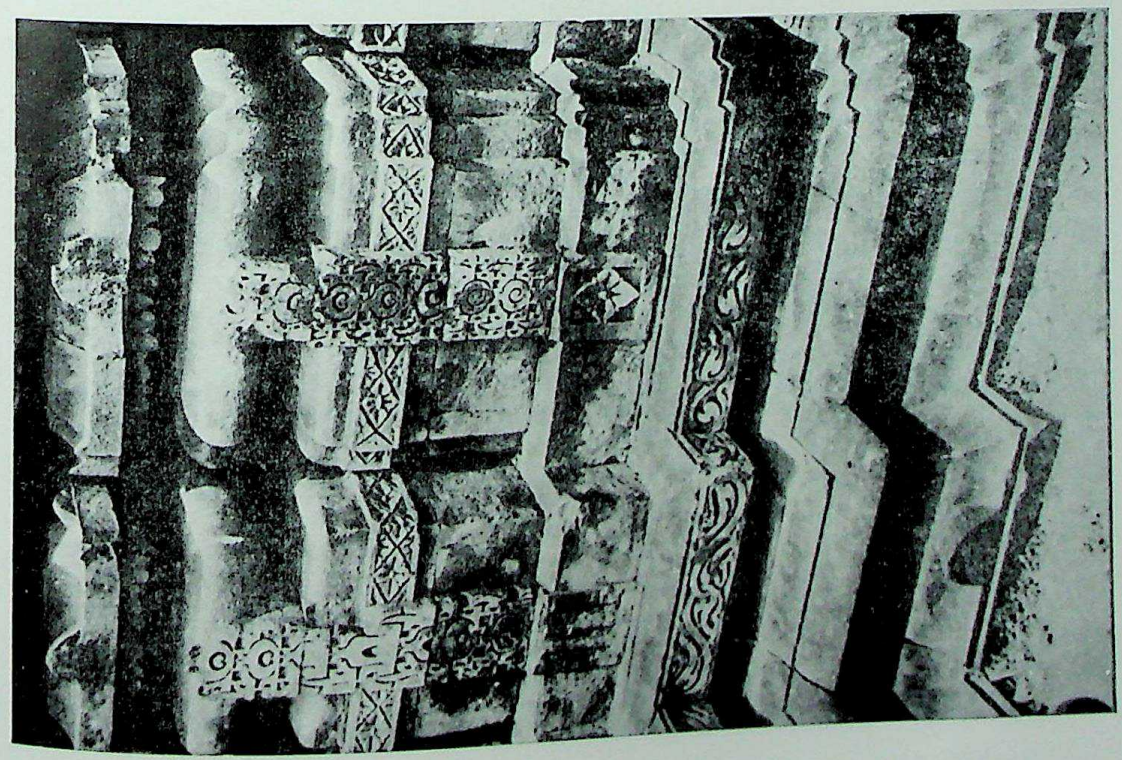

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Pl. VI

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. VI Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, wall face (North) of the partly renovated sabhāmaṇḍapa

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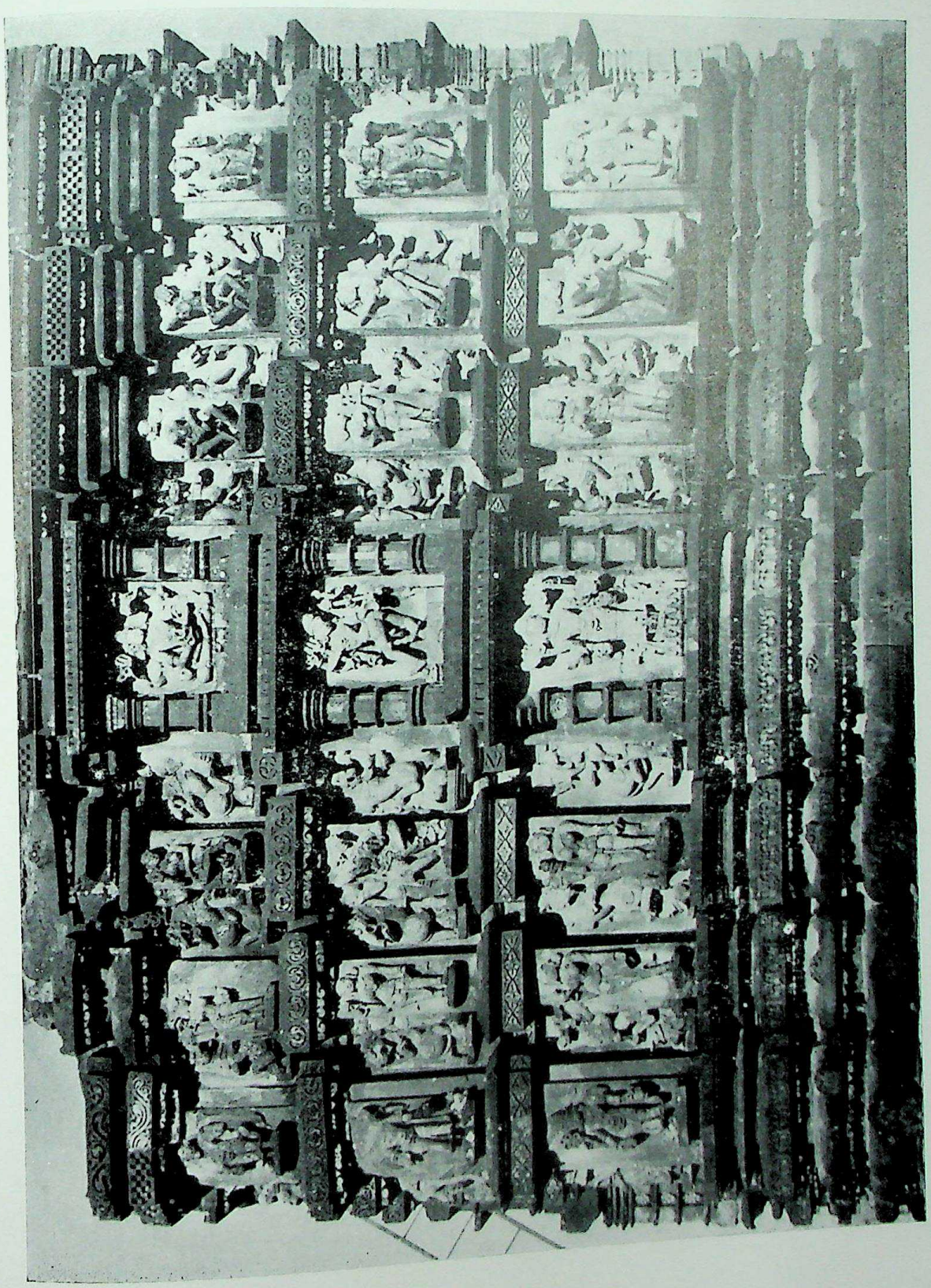
Pl. VII Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, triple register of sculptures, wall facing West

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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Pl. VIII

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. VIII Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, triple register of sculptures, wall facing South

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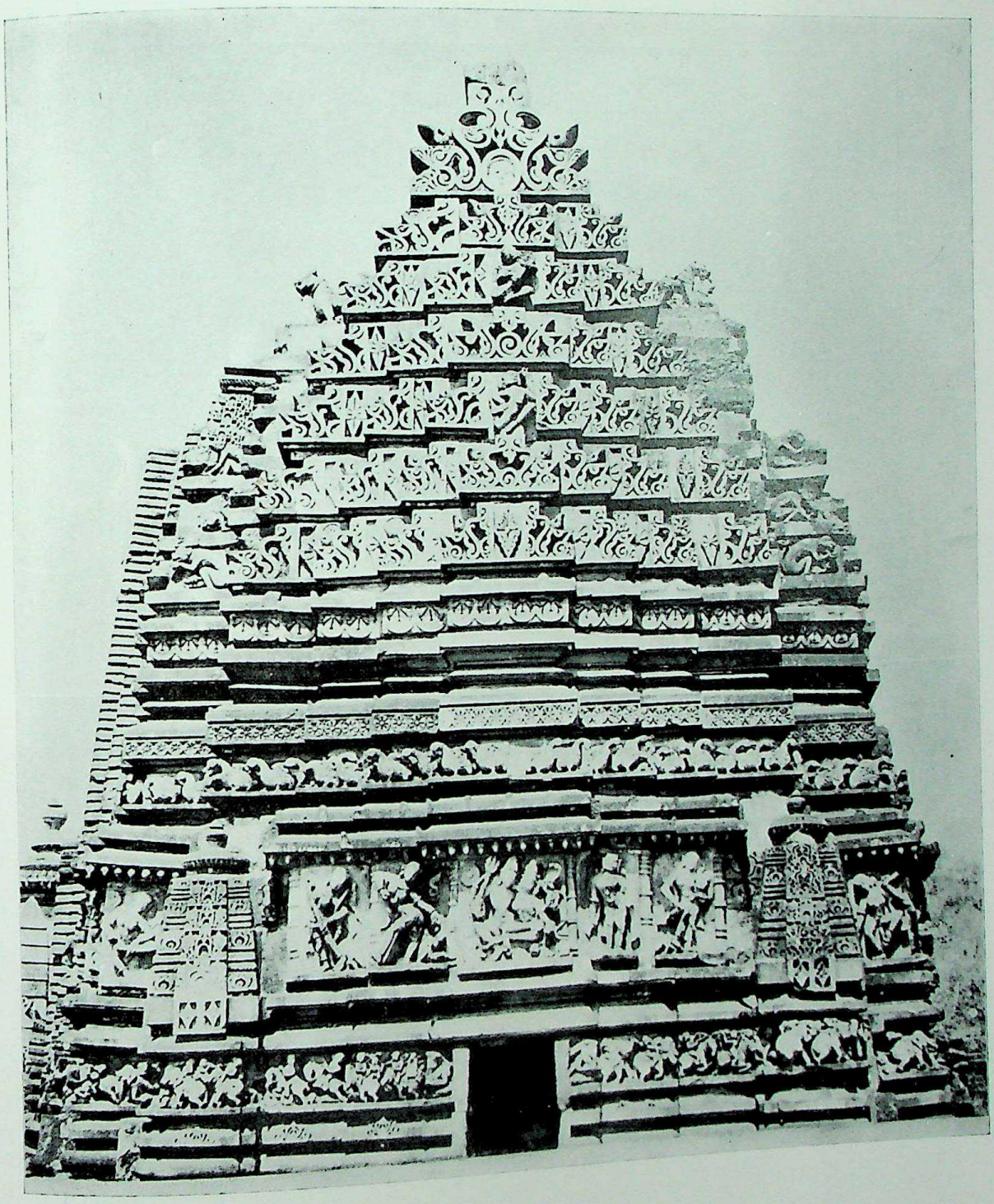
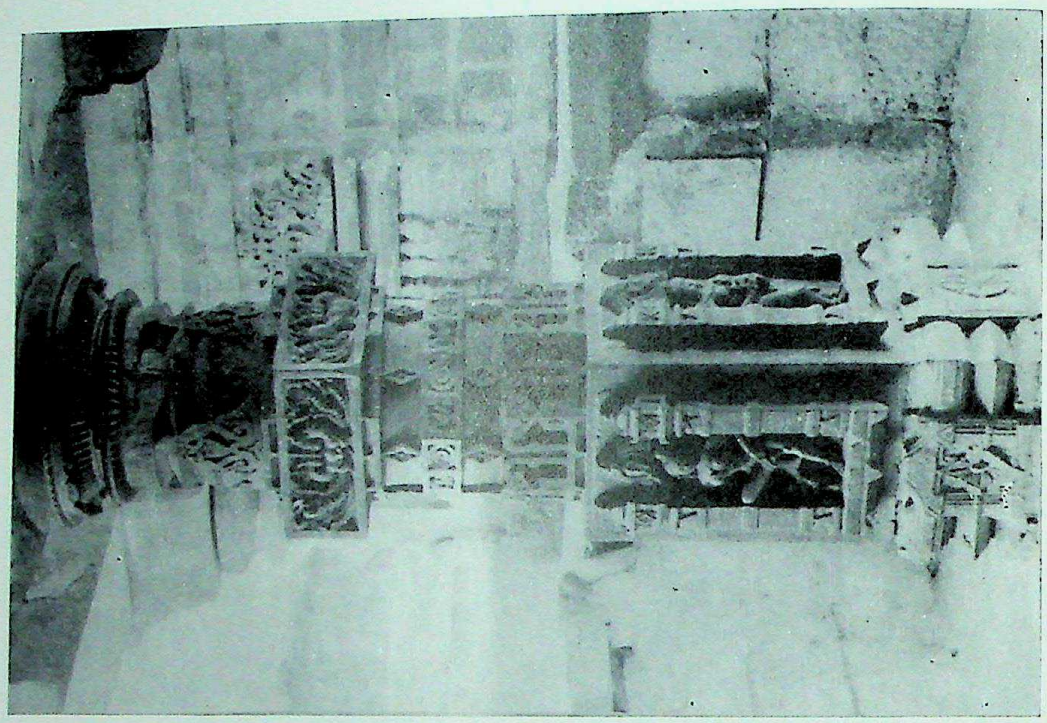
Pl. IX Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, sculptures and decoration on the Śukanāsā facing East

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. X



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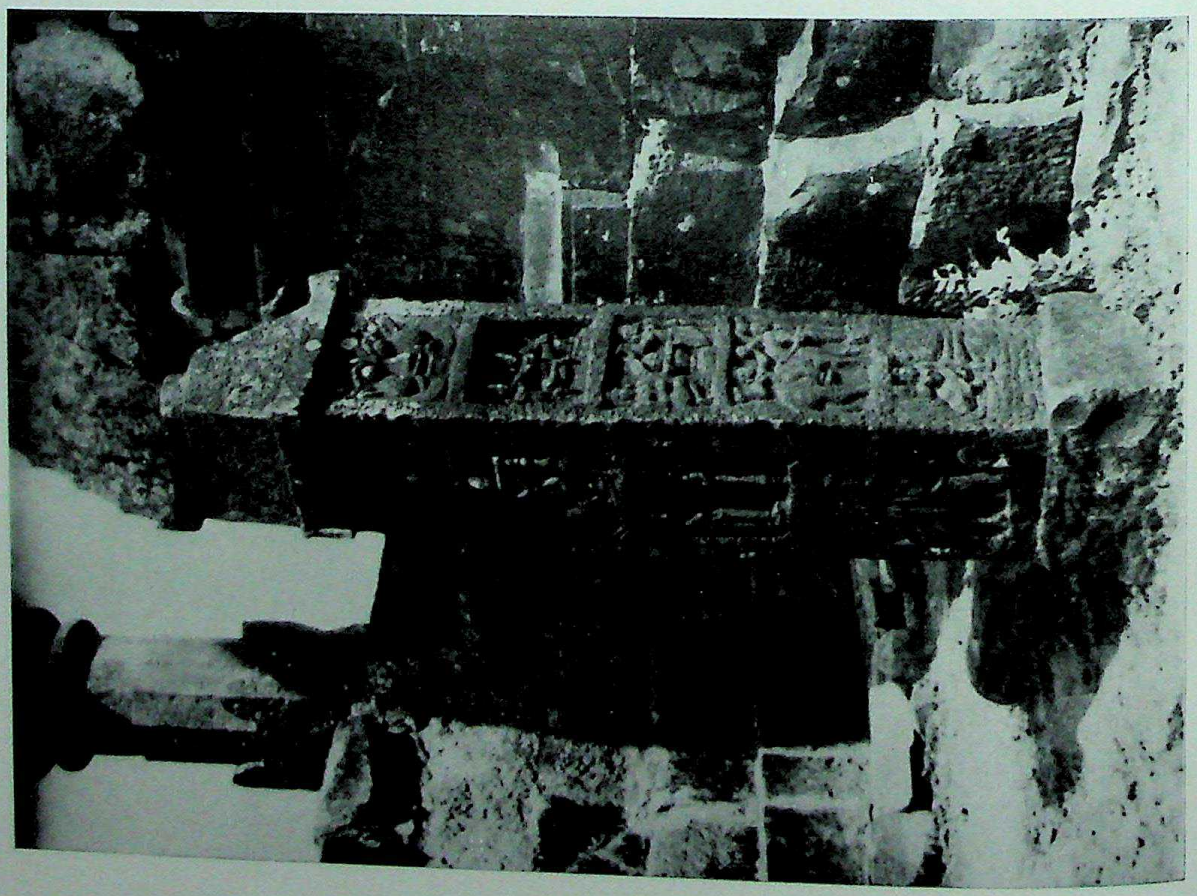

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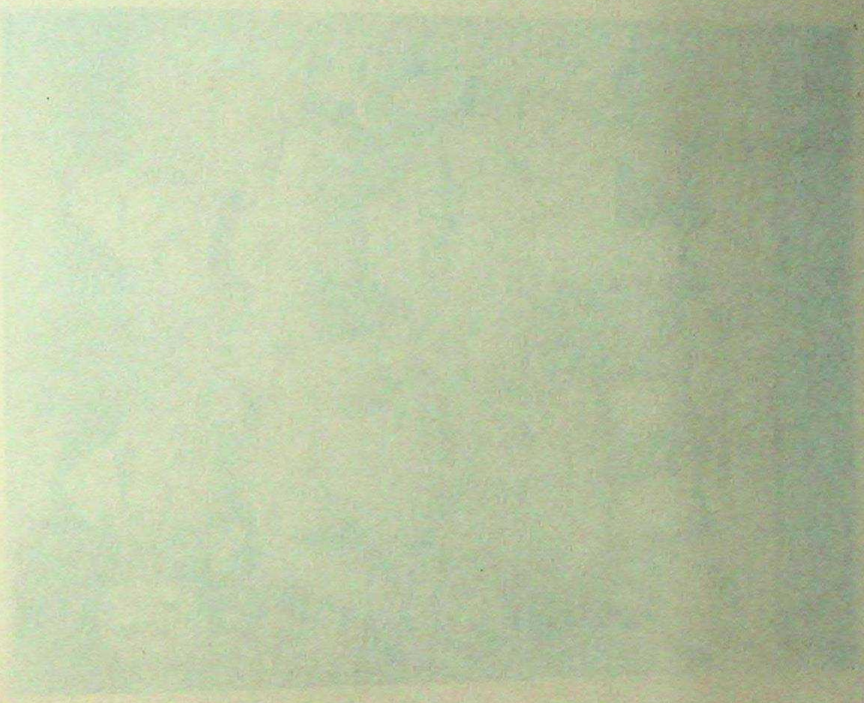


Pl. X 1 Vīrgaḷ in front of Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

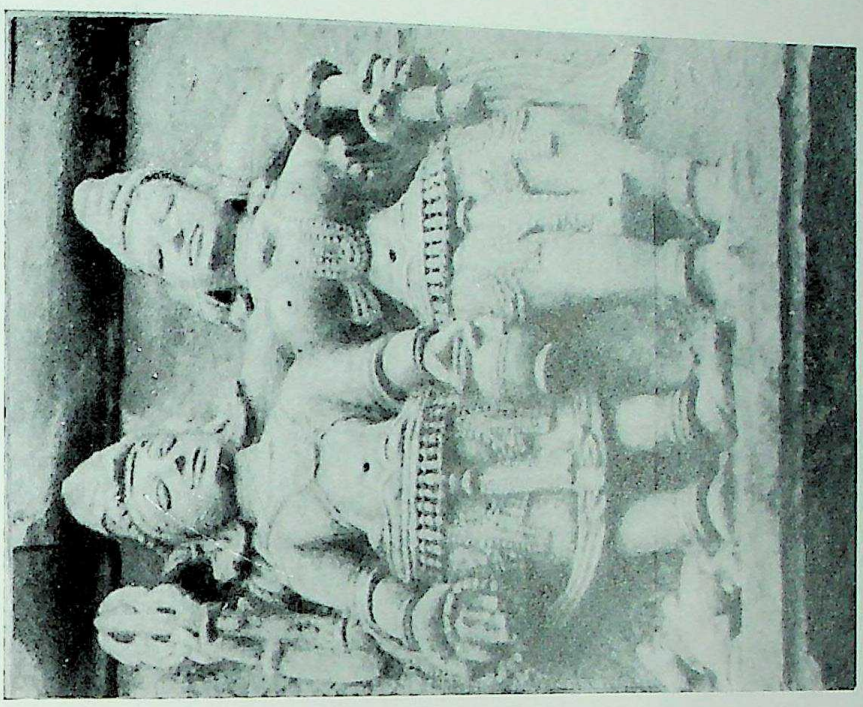
2 Pillar of the sabhāmaṇḍapa of Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

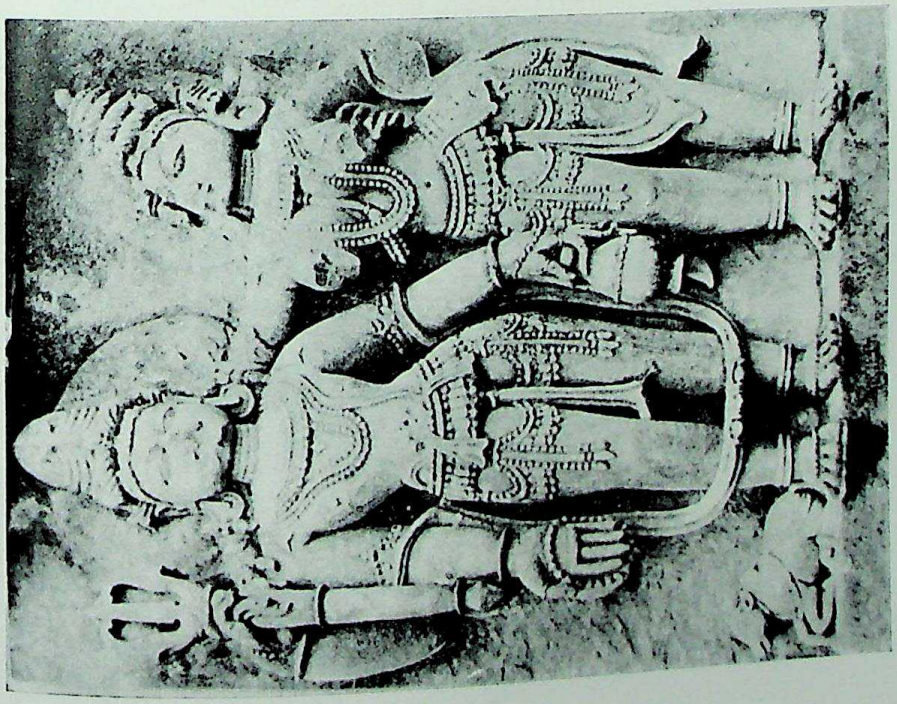
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XI 1 Śiva-Pārvatī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Third Register

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

2





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Pl. XII

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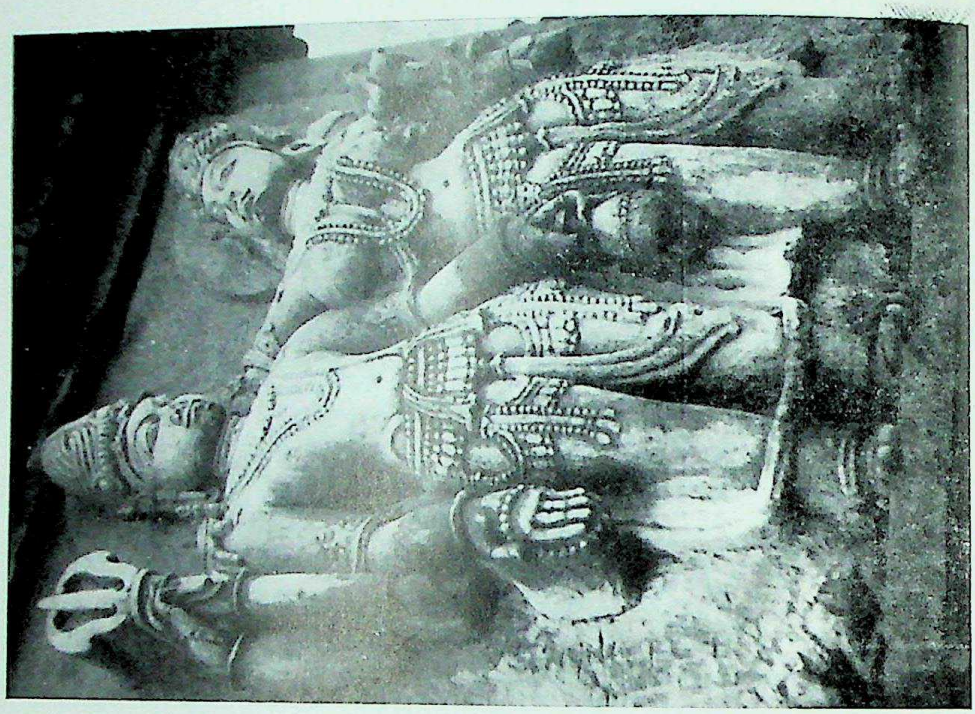

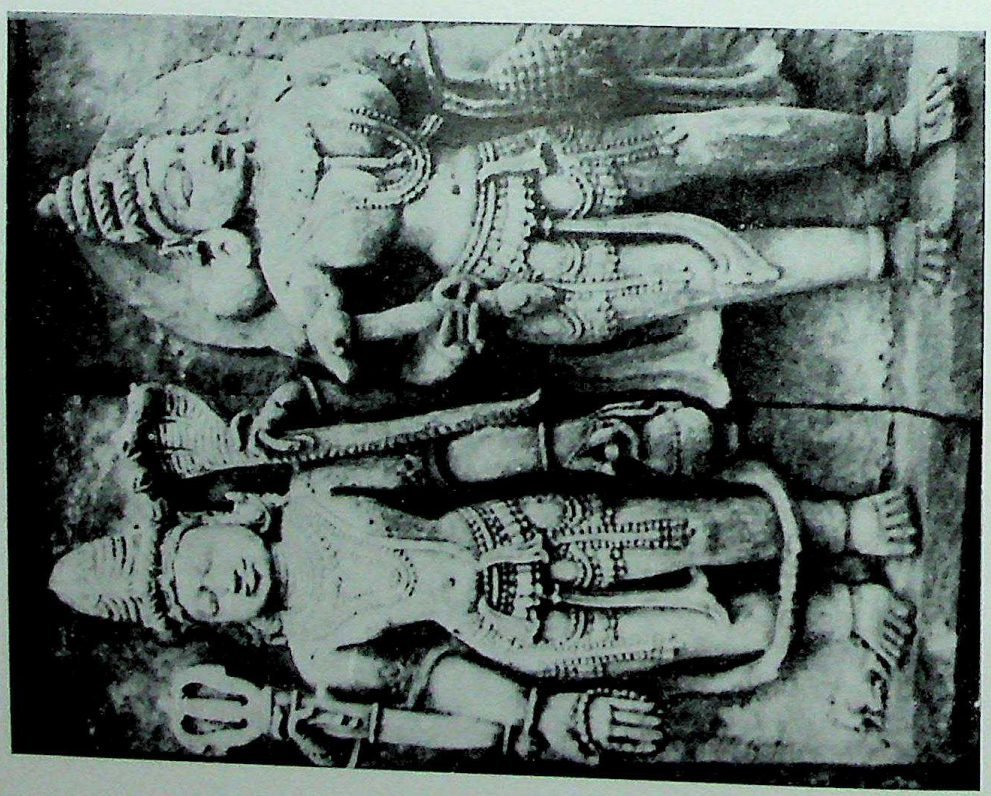

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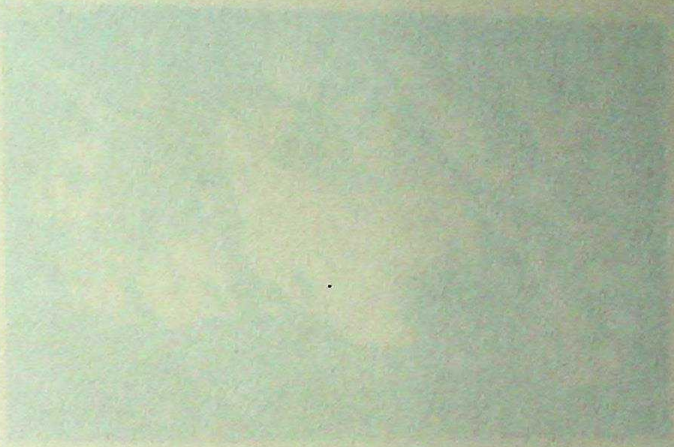
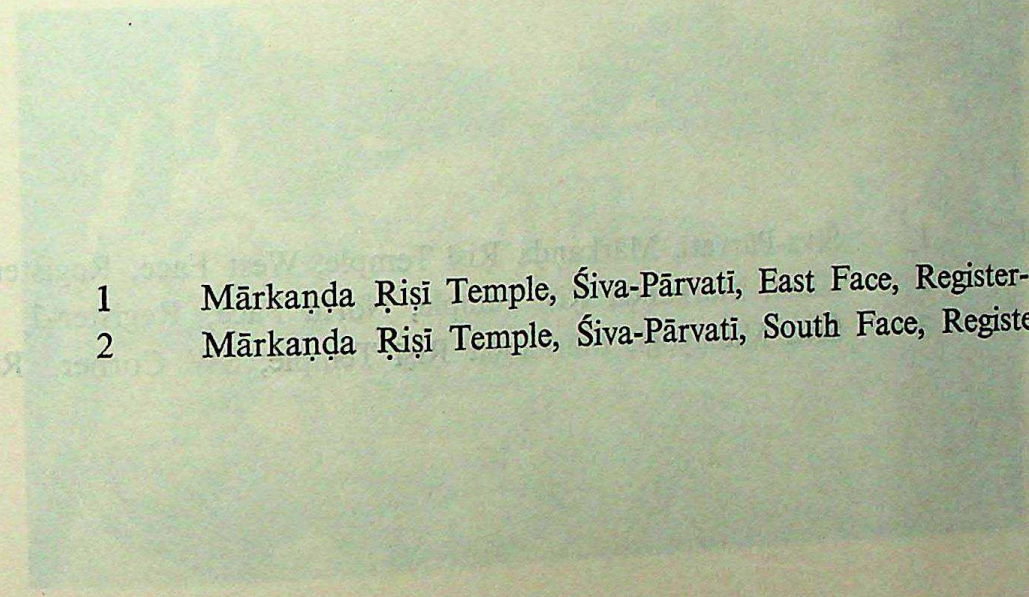
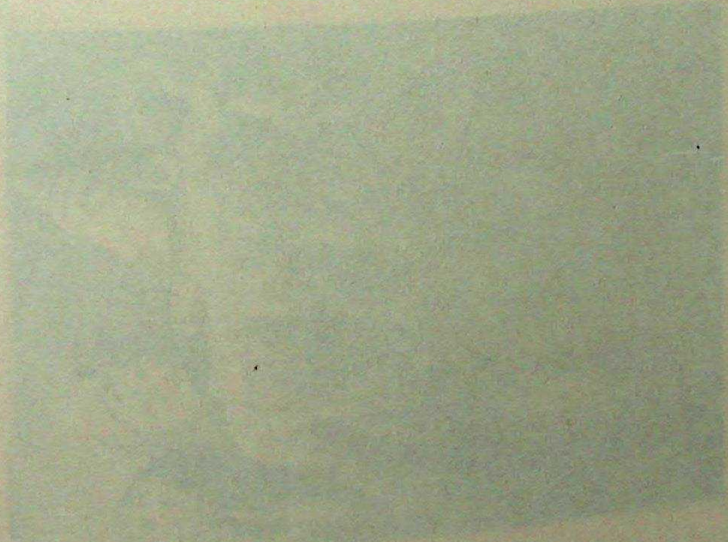




Pl. XII 1 Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Śiva-Pārvatī, East Face, Register-2

2 Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Śiva-Pārvatī, South Face, Register-2



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

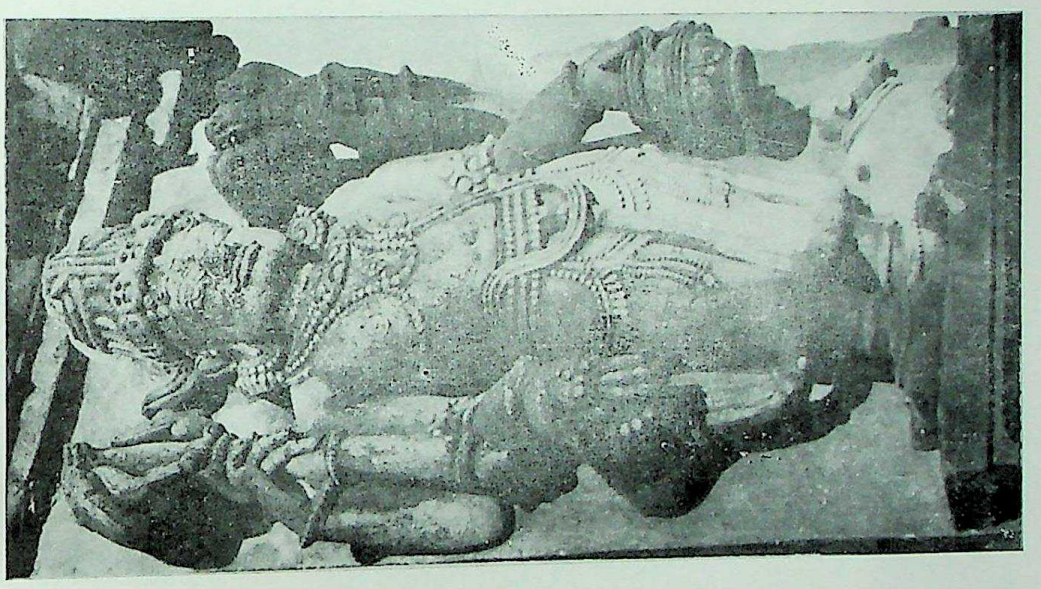
Pl. XIII 1 Śiva-Pārvatī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-2

2 Iśāna, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-2

3 Śiva Mahāyogī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, SW Corner, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

3



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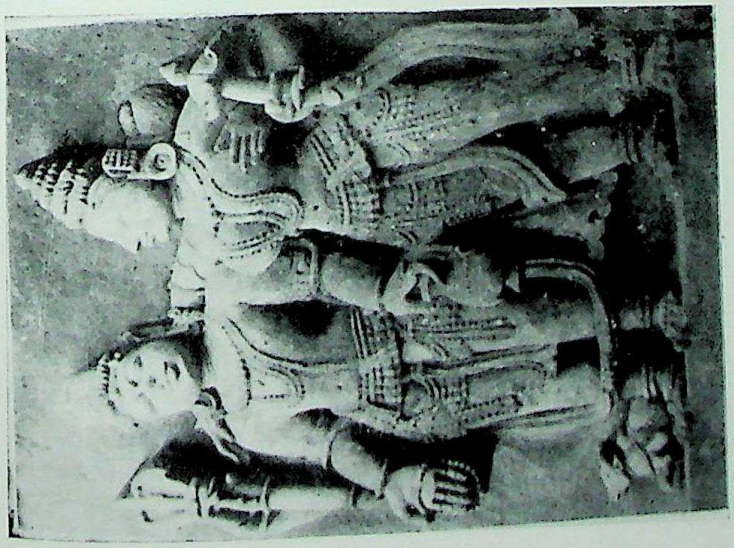

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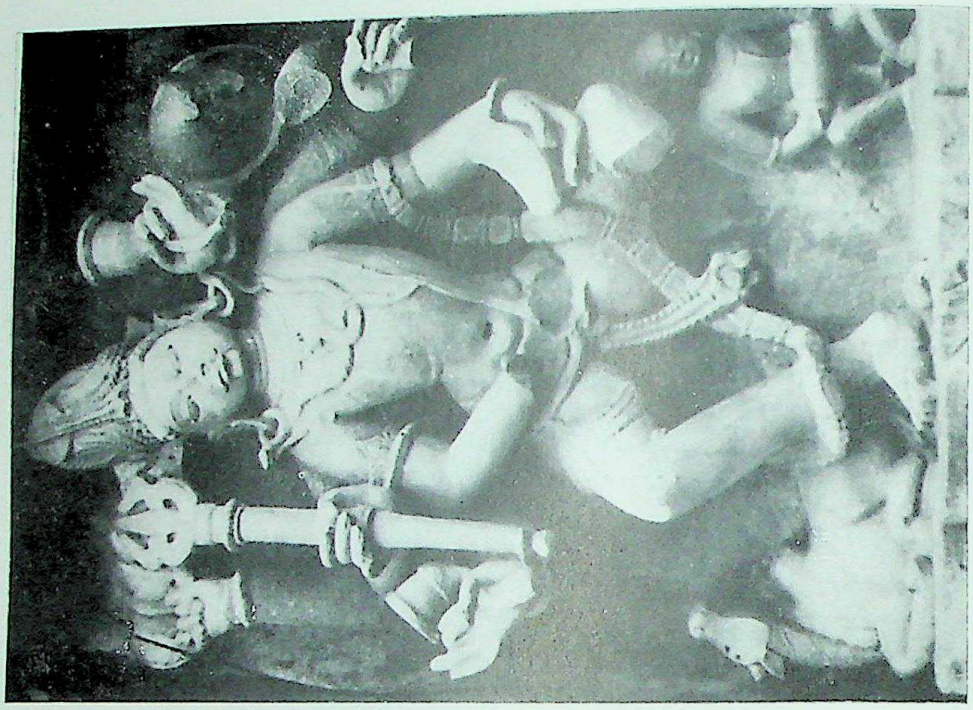
Pl. XIV



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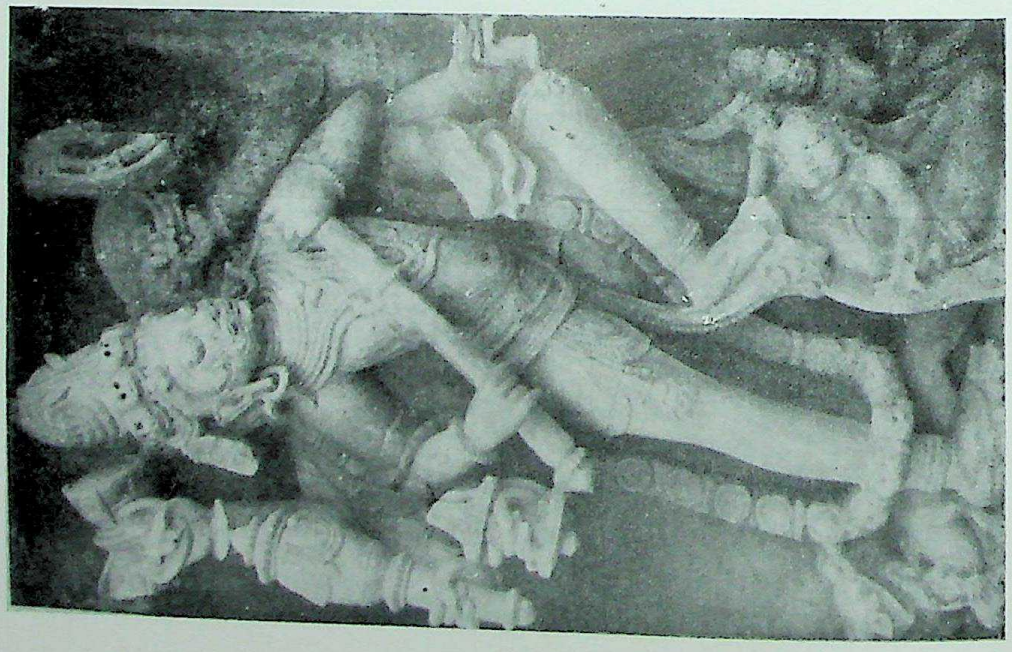

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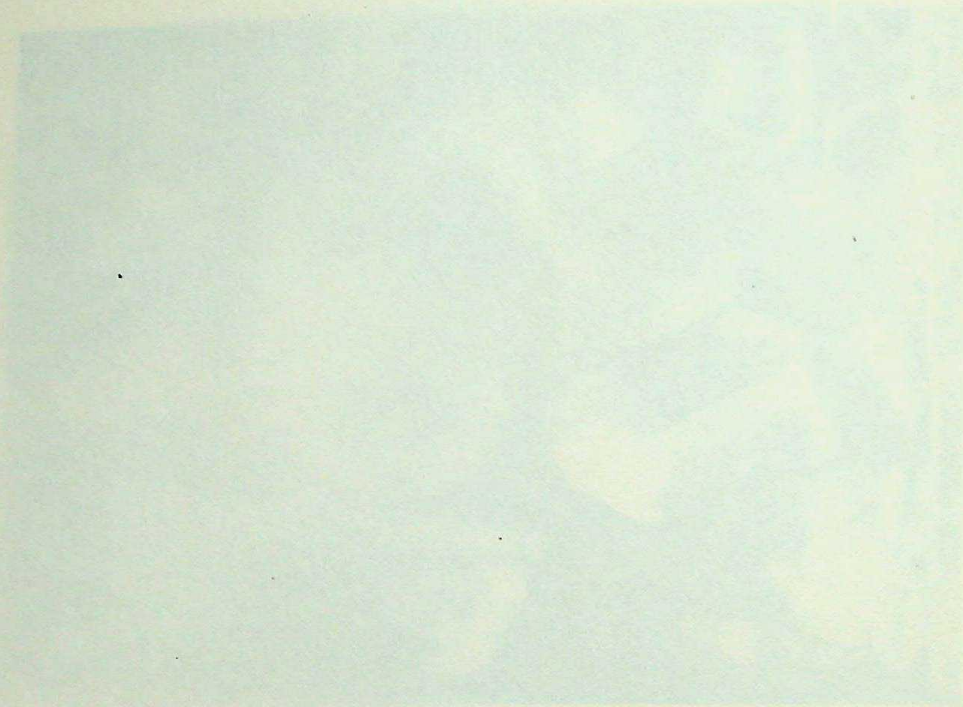
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XIV 1 Andhakāsuravadhamūrtī Śiva Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

2 Dancing Śiva, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

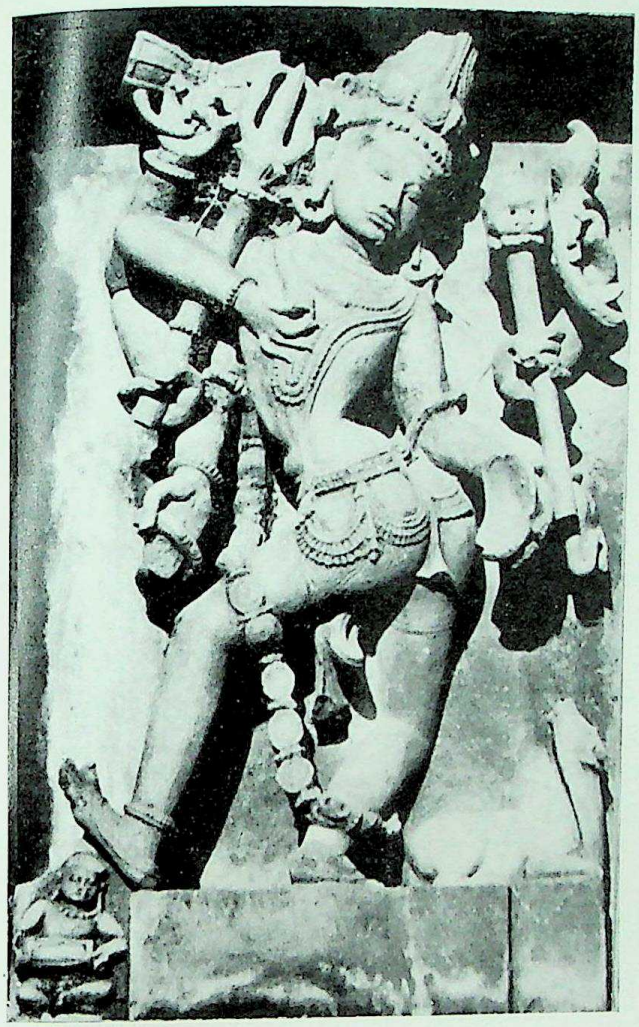


Pl. XV 1 Dancing Śiva, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-2

2 Yogāsana Trimūrtī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-3

3 Śiva-Kārttikeya-Brahmā Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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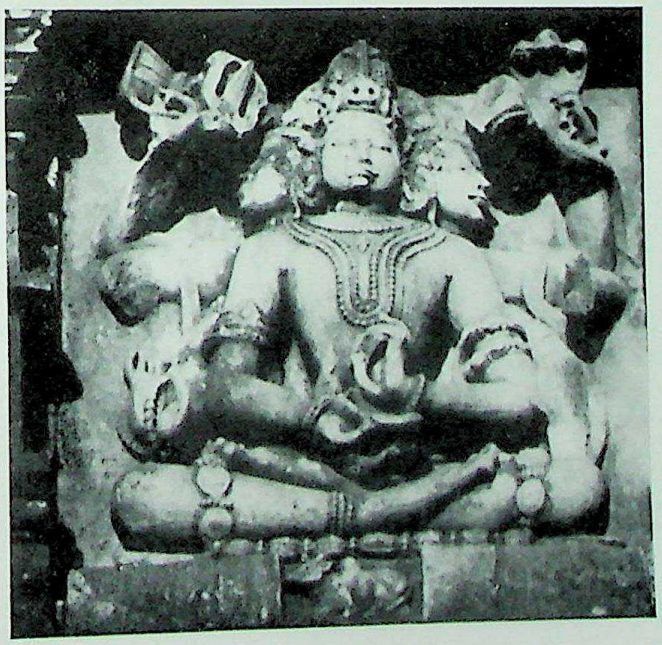

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Pl. XVI

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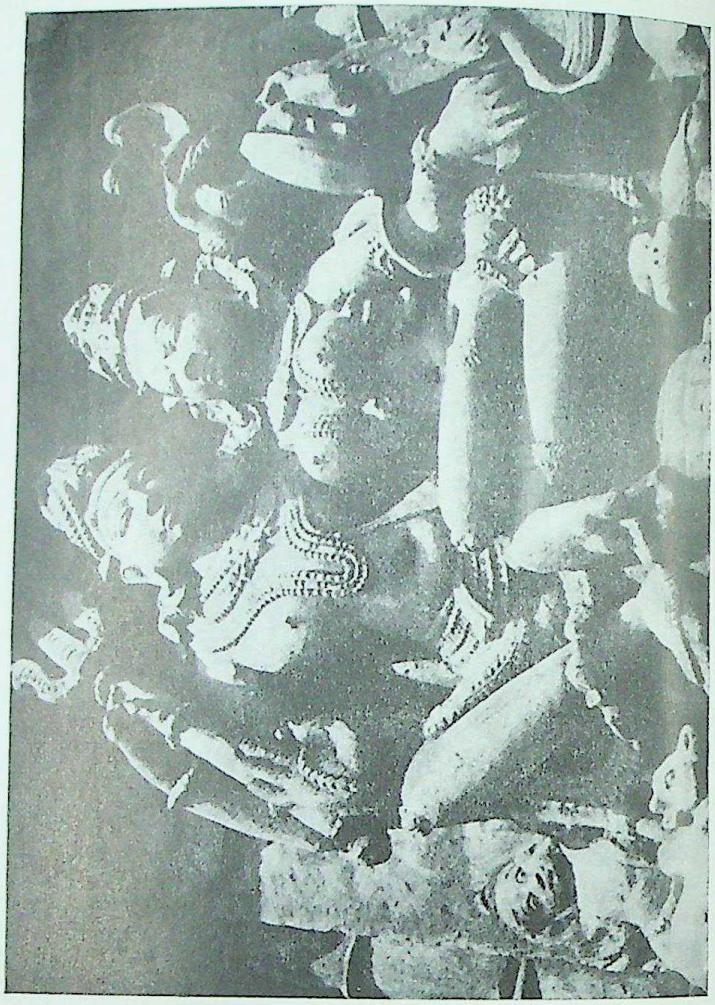

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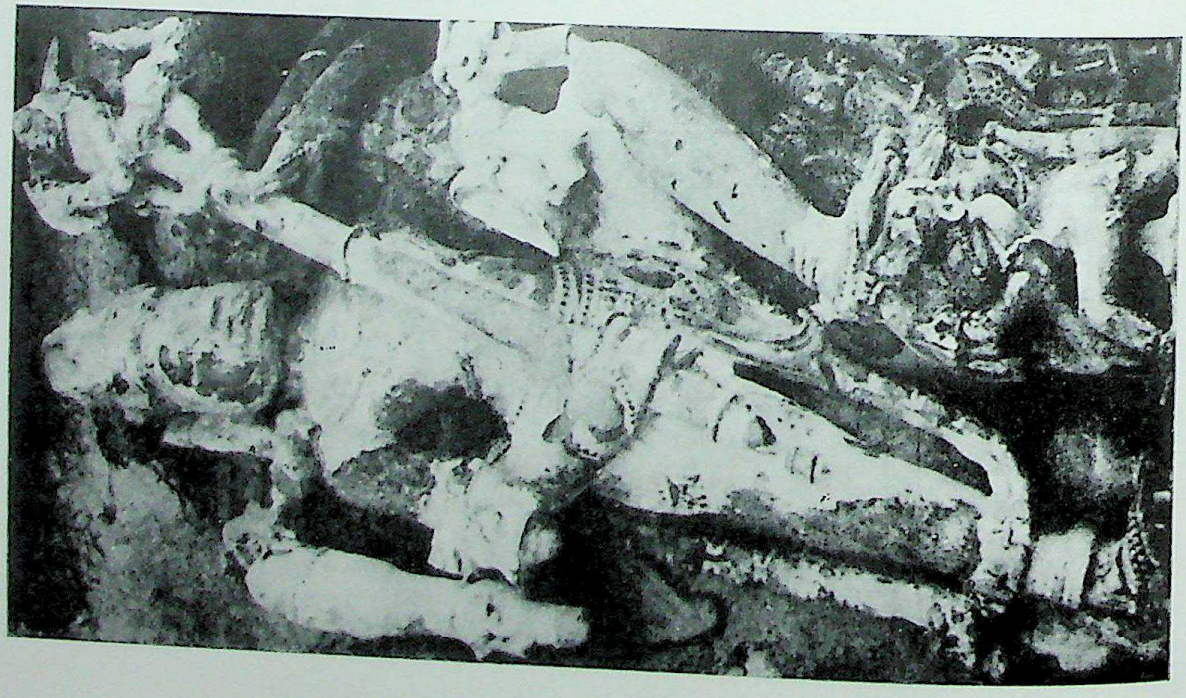

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XVI 1 Andhakāsuravadhamūrtī of Śiva, Umā-Śaṅkara Temple, South Face

2 Śiva-Pārvatī, Stray sculpture

3 Śiva-Pārvatī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Vestibule facing East

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Pl. XVII

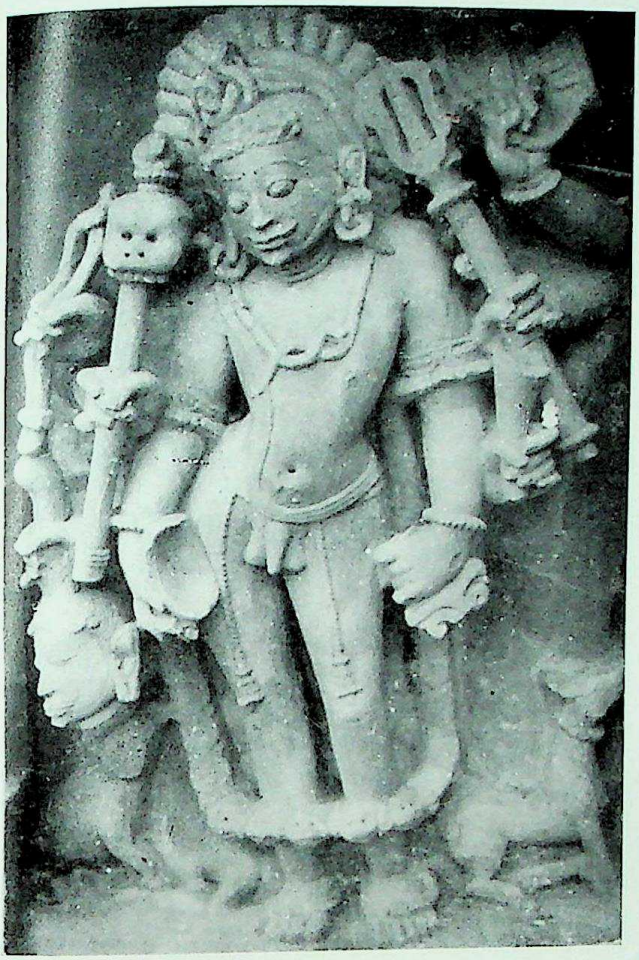
1 Nude Bhairava, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-2

2 Nude Bhairava, Stray sculpture, Daśāvatāra Temple

3 Nude Bhairava, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1

4 Kaṅkāla-Bhikshāṭana Mūrtī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-3

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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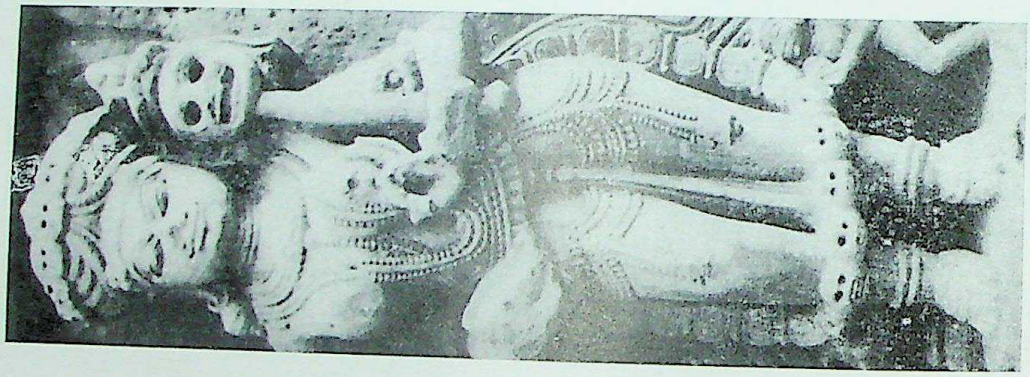

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Pl. XVIII 1 Śiva Mahākāla, Stray sculpture
2 Bhairavī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1
3 Nirṛiti with consort, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1

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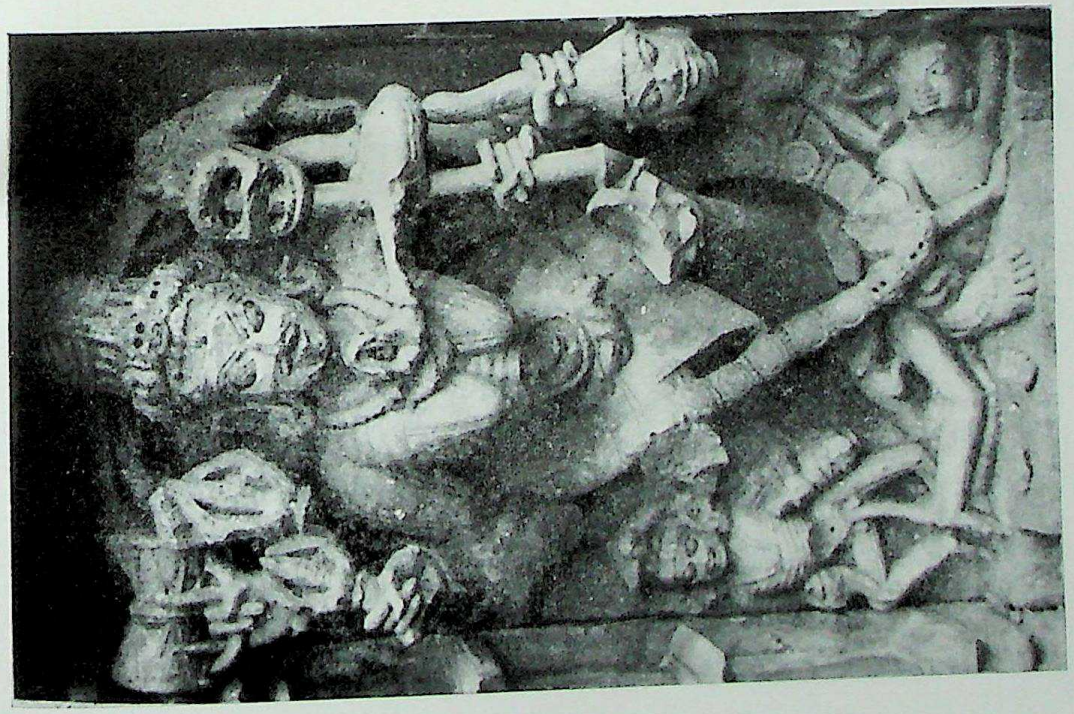
Pl. XIX 1 Cāmuṇḍā, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-1

2 Cāmuṇḍā, Mṛikuṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

2



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Pl. XX

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XX 1 Dancing Gaṇeśa, Mārkaṇḍa, Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

2 Gaṇeśa, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, SW Corner, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXI 1 Gaṇeśa (standing), Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Vestibule
Gaṇeśa (seated), Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Hall
Śiva (standing), Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
2 Gaṇeśa, Stray sculpture, Daśāvatāra Temple

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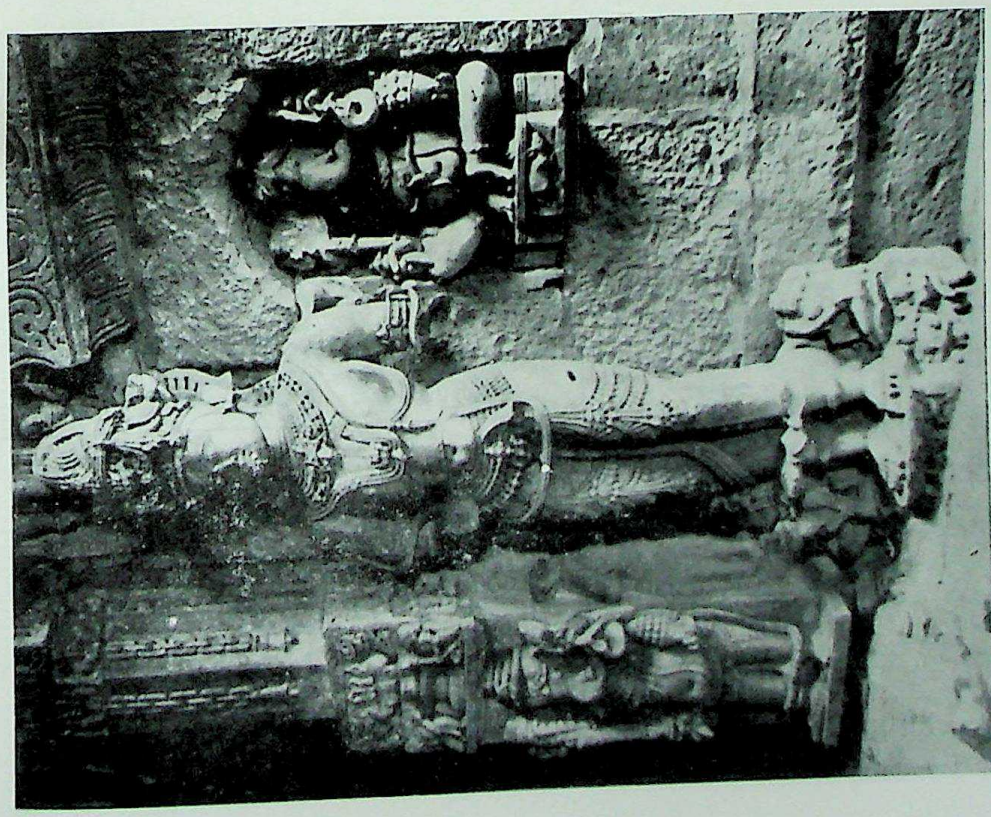
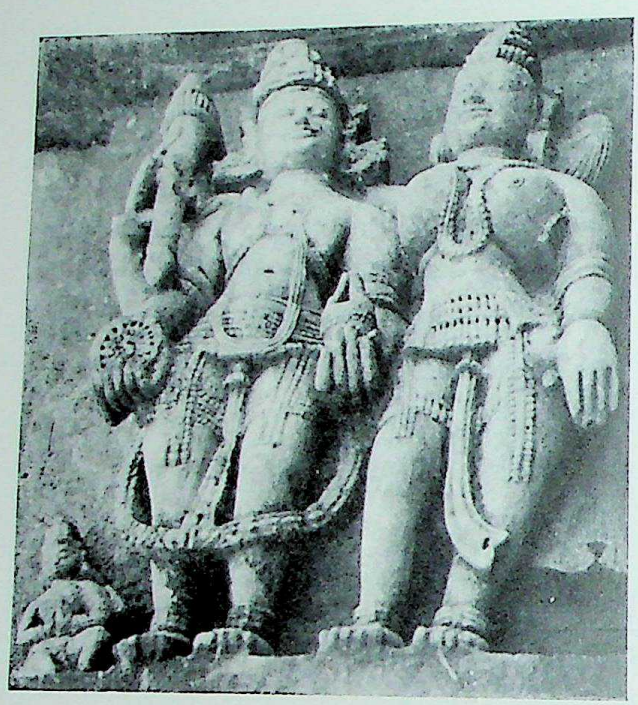


CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXII



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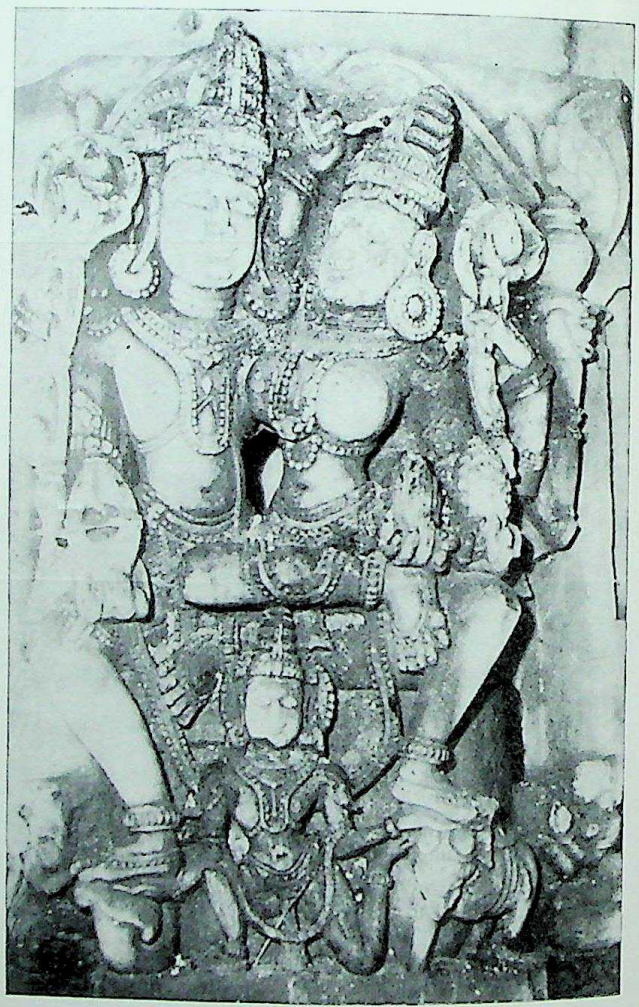

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Pl. XXII 1 Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-3
2 Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī, Stray sculpture, Daśāvatāra Temple
3 Nṛivarāha, Stray sculpture, Daśāvatāra Temple

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Pl. XXIII 1 Vilakṣaṇa Sadāśiva, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-3

2 Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha-Arka, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1

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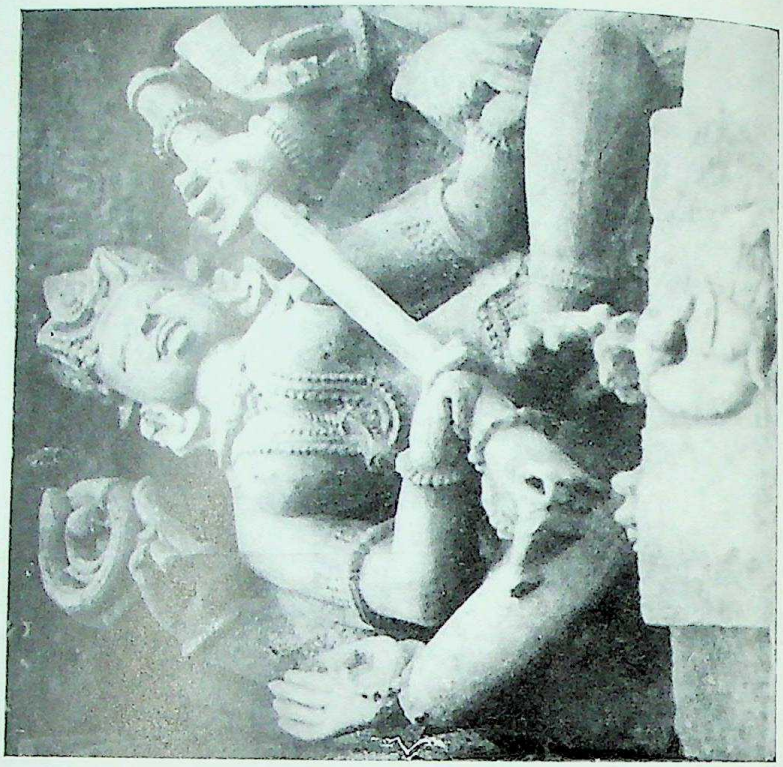
Pl. XXIV



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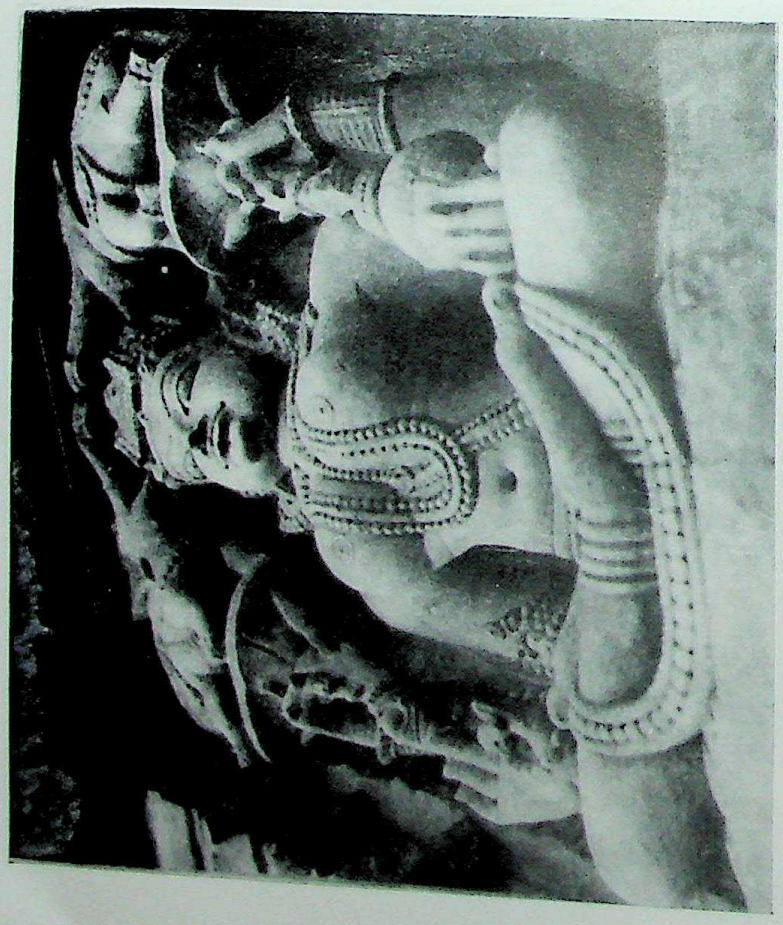

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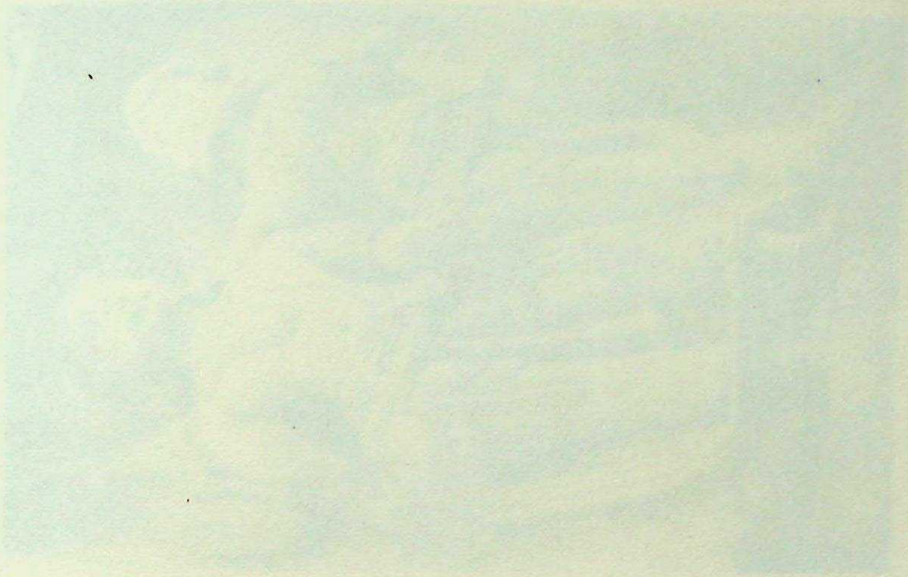
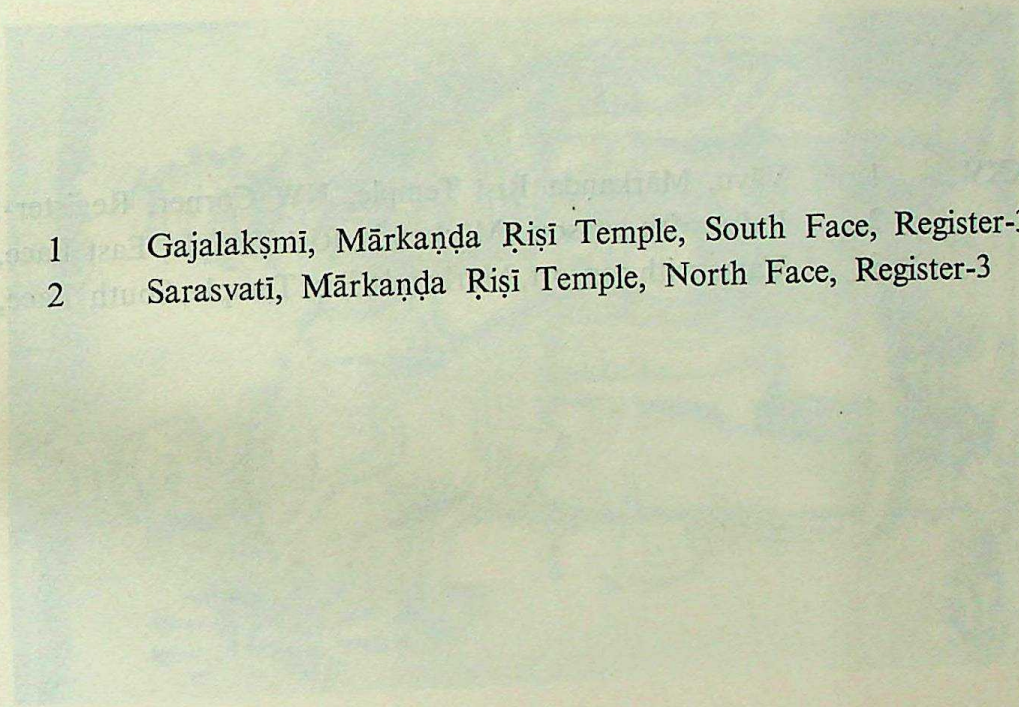
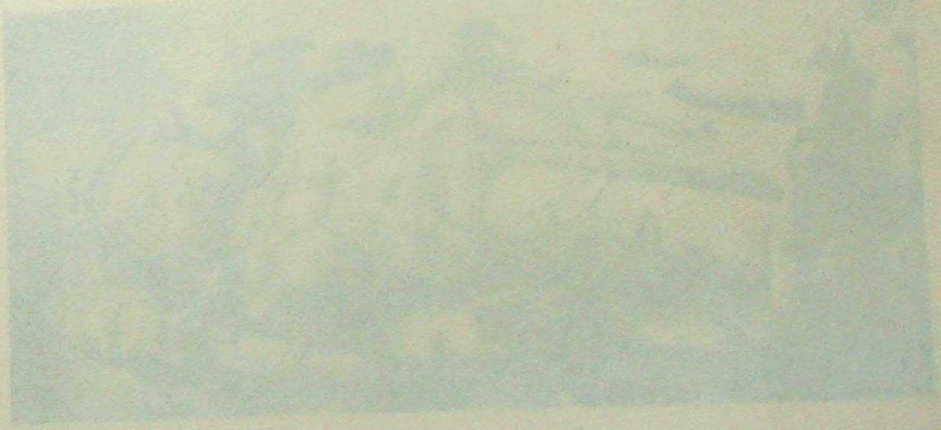




Pl. XXIV 1 Gajalakṣmī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-3
2 Sarasvatī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-3



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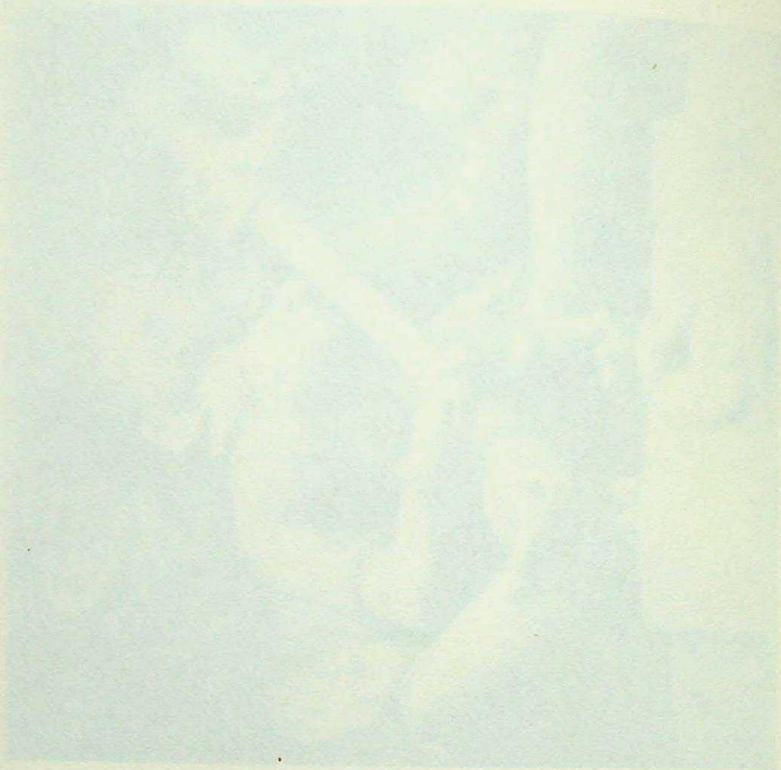

Pl. XXV 1 Vāyu, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, NW Corner, Register-1
2 Indra with consort, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-1
3 Yama with consort, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

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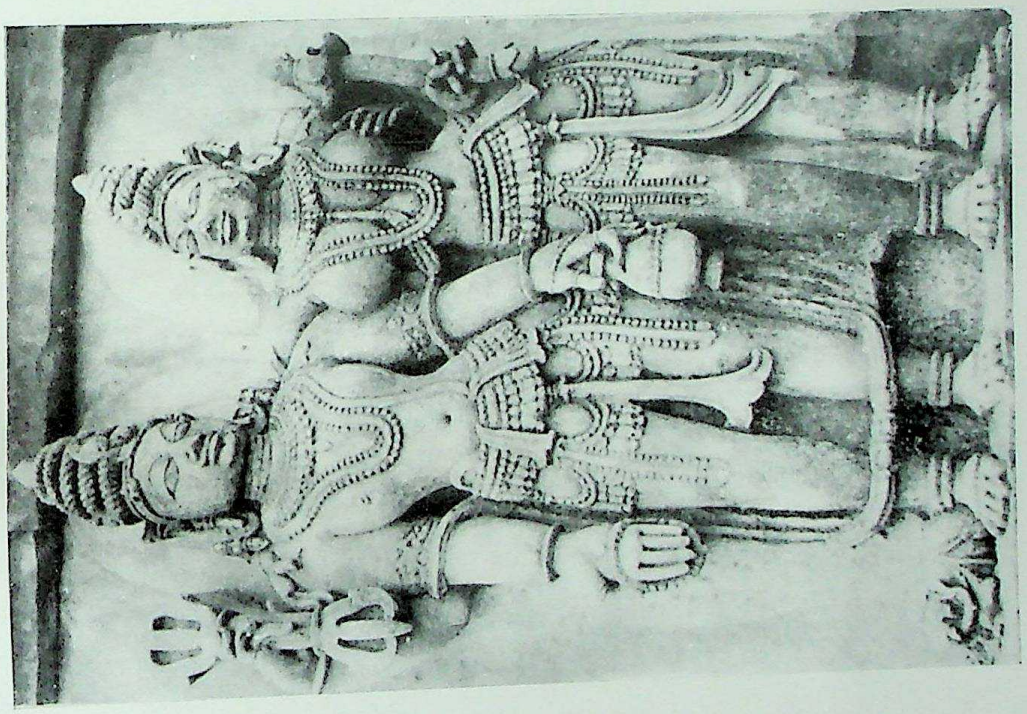

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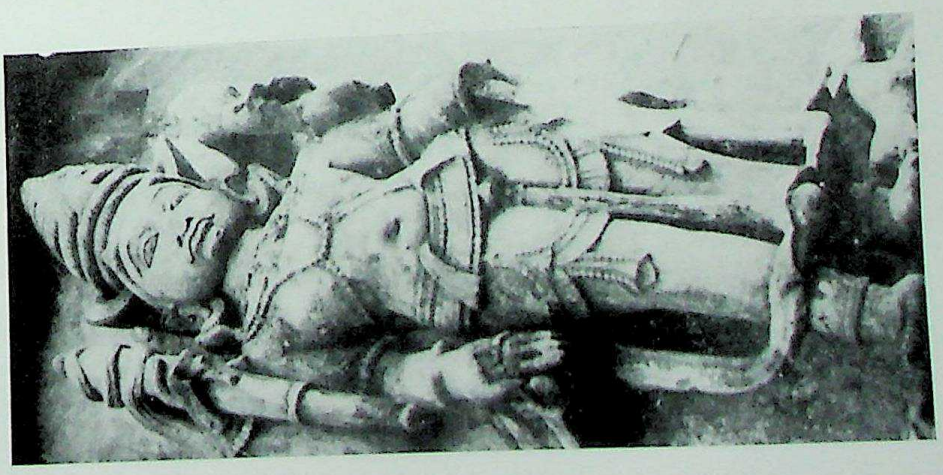

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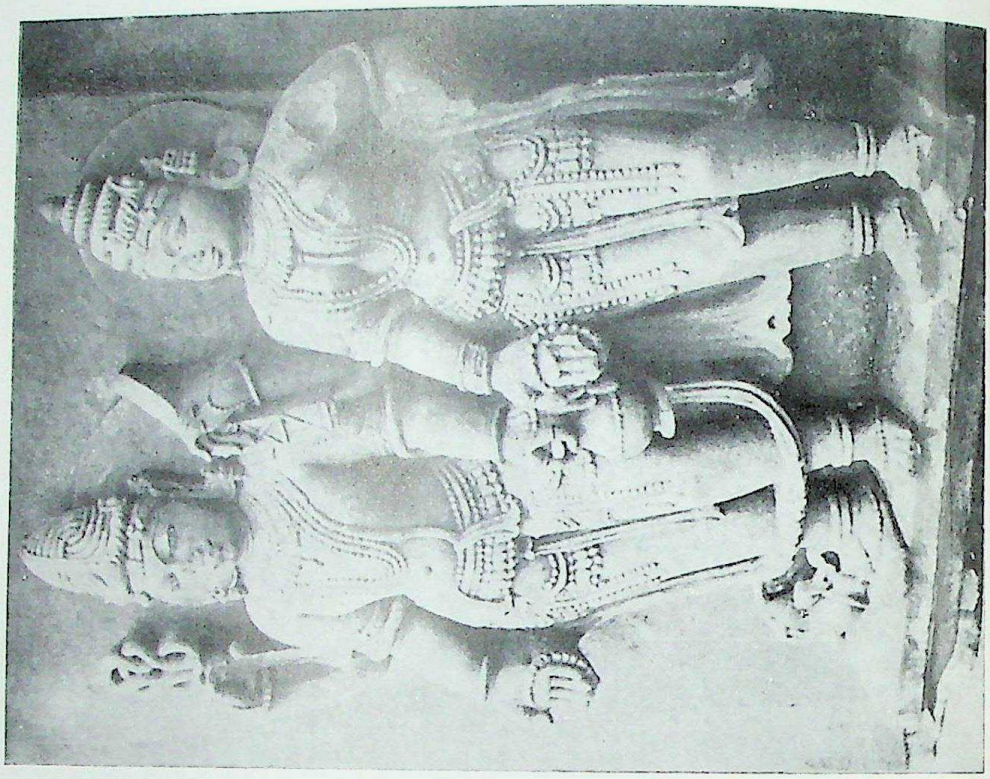

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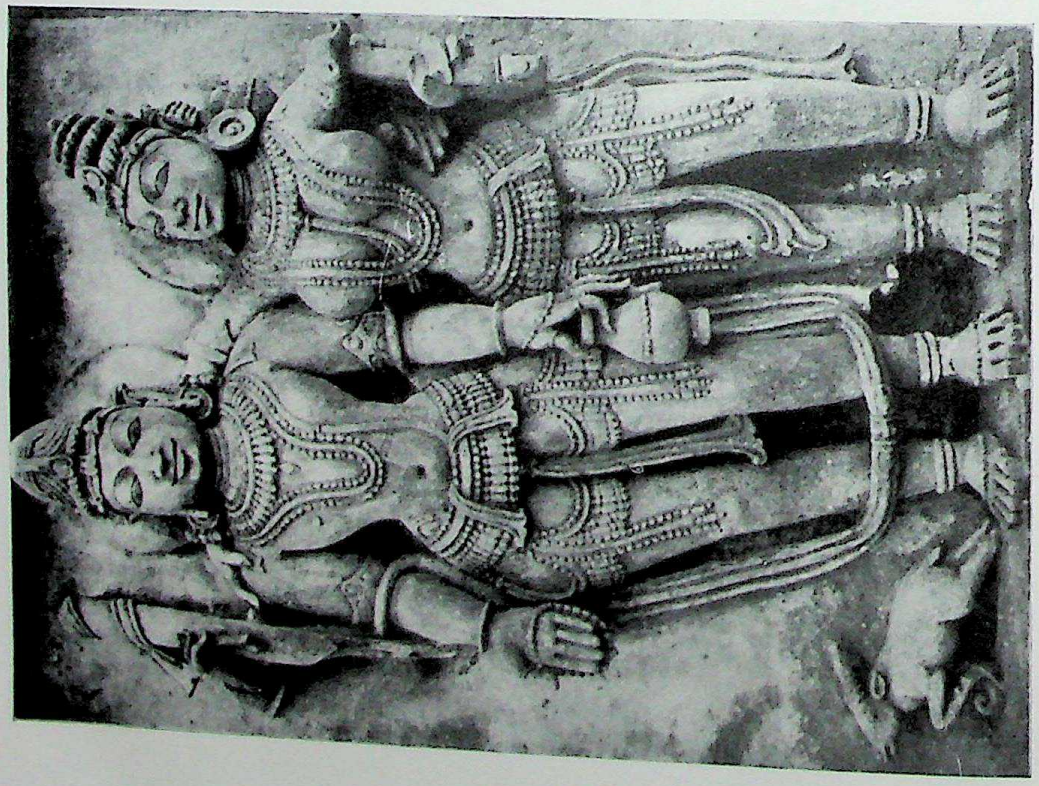

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Pl. XXVI 1 Vāyu with consort, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-1

2 Varuṇa with consort, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1

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Pl. XXVII 1 Yama, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, SW Corner, Register-1
2 Indra, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-1
3 Vaṛuṇa, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, NW Corner, Register-1
4 Kubera, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-1

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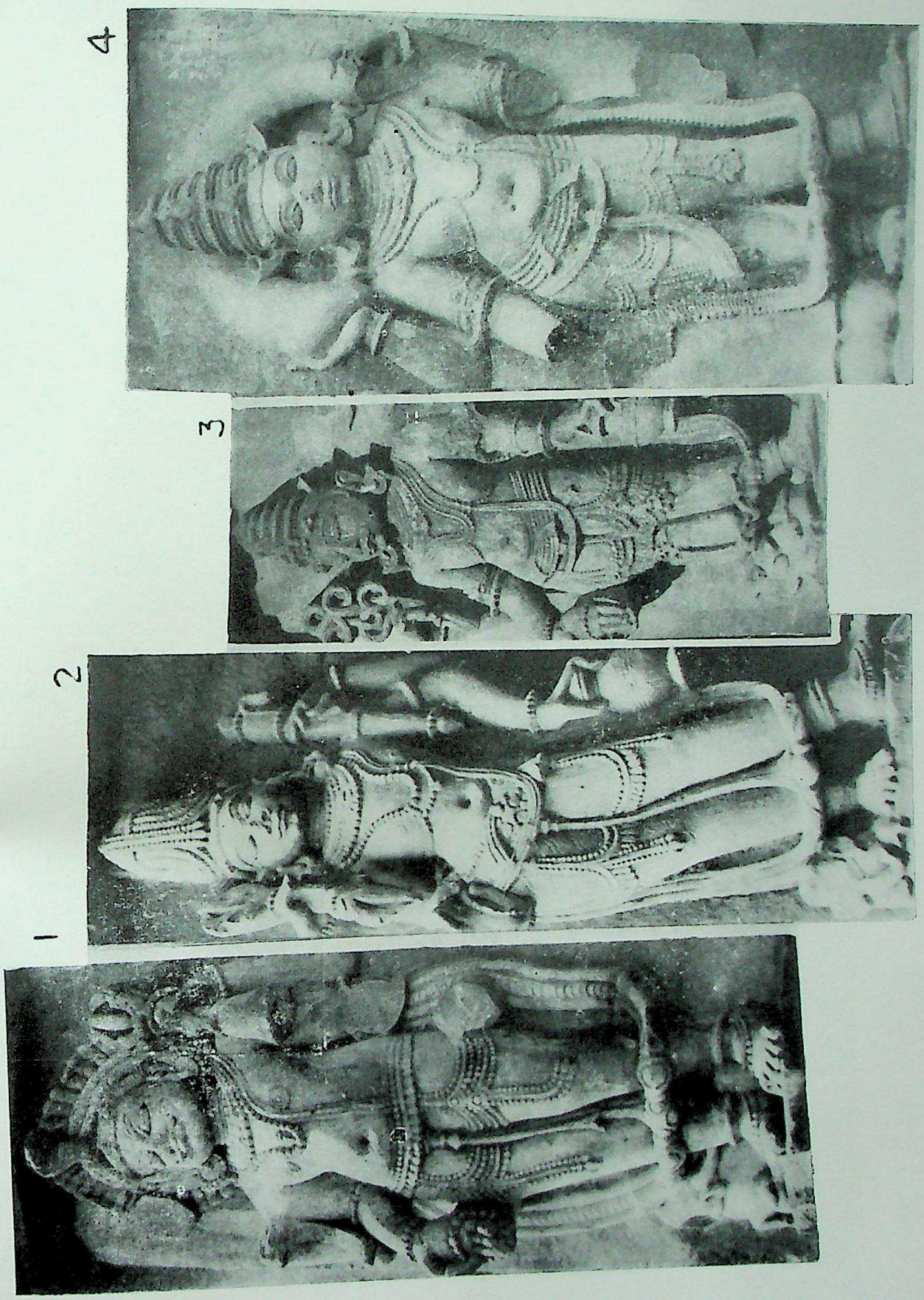

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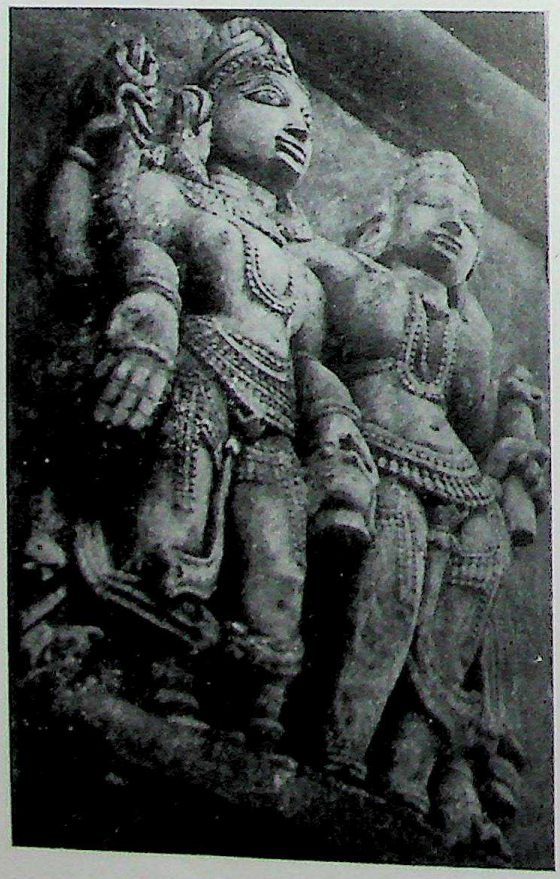

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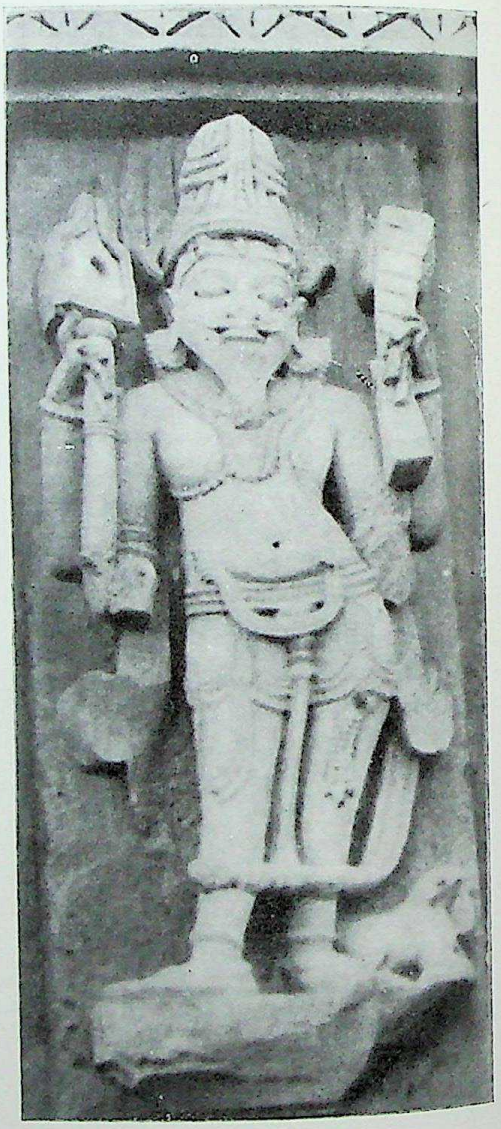

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Pl. XXVIII 1 Agni, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1
2 Iśāna, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, NE Corner, Register-3
3 Agni, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

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Pl. XXIX 1 Vasu with consort, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-3
2 Vasu, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, SW Corner, Register-3
3 Bhūta, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

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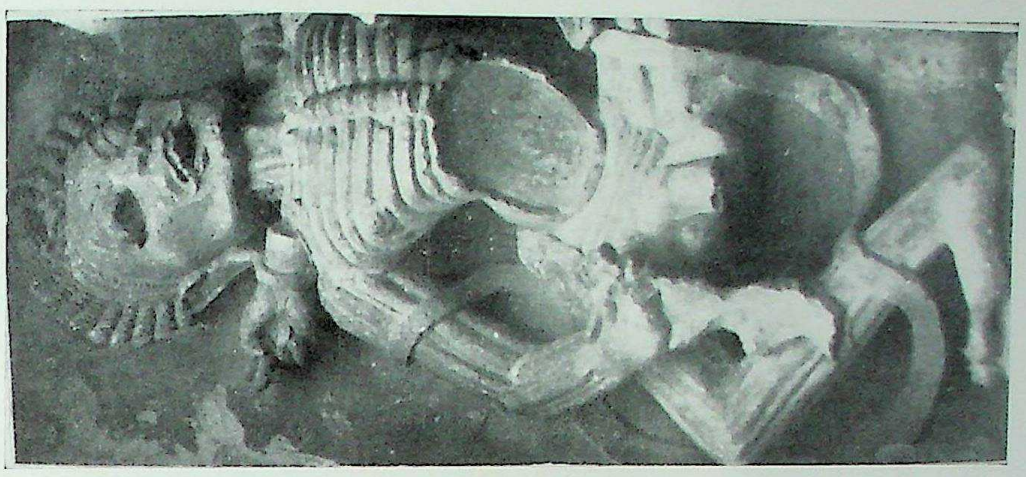

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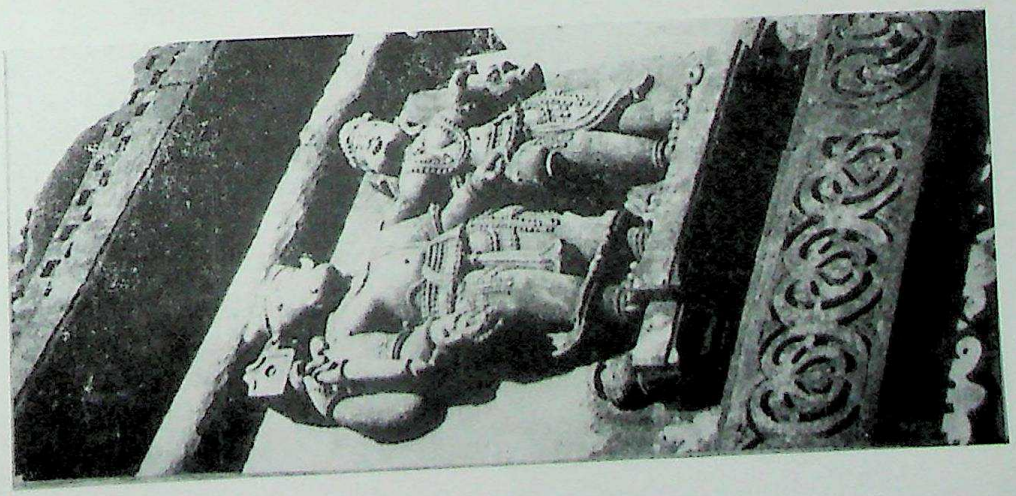

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Pl. XXX

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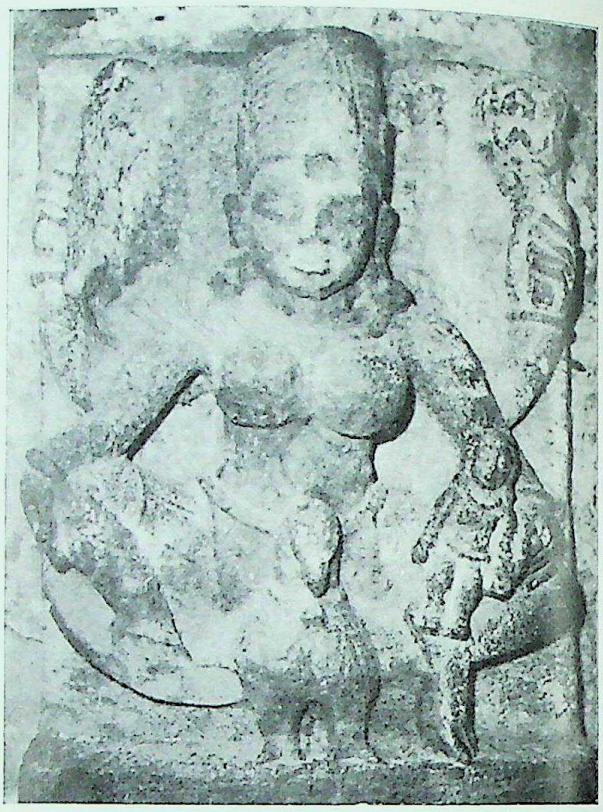

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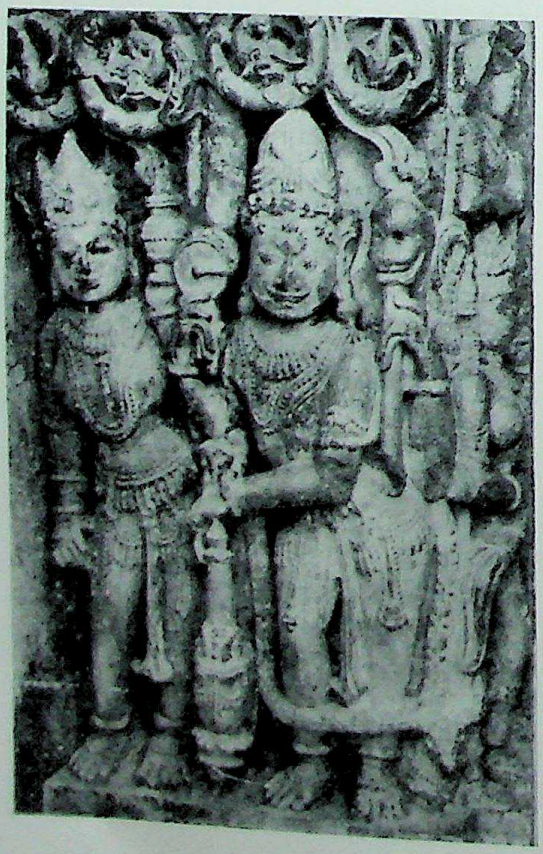

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXX

1 Candra, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Vestibule
2 Kaumārī, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Vestibule
3 Viṣṇu-Bhairava, Yamadharma Temple, Doorframe
4 Yamunā, Yamadharma Temple, Doorframe

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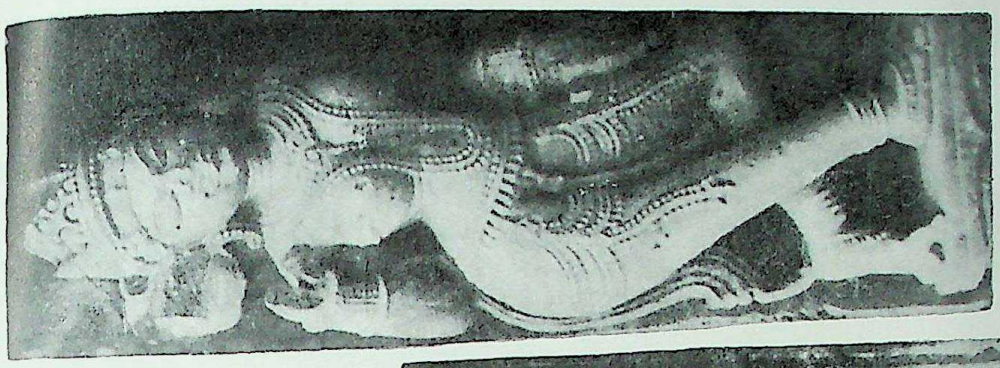
Pl. XXXI Apsarās, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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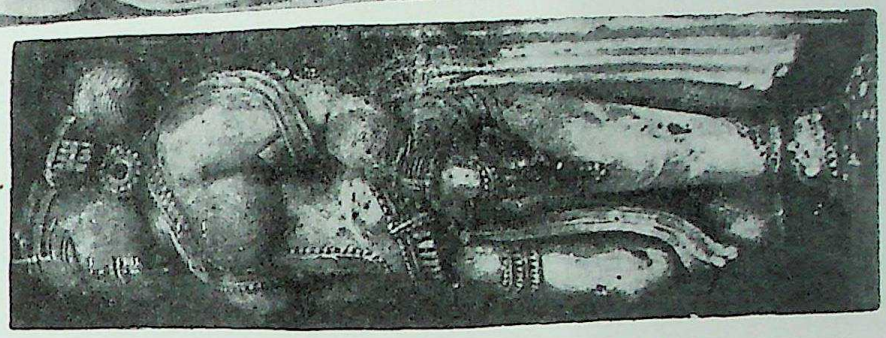

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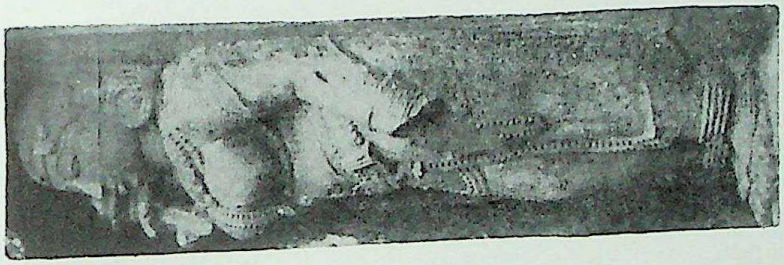

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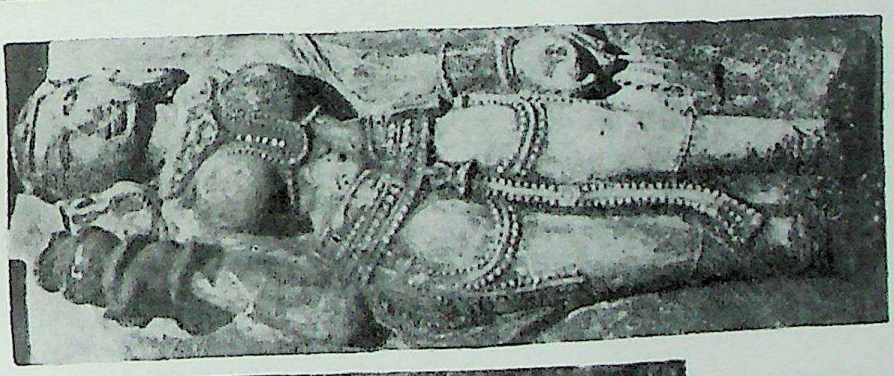

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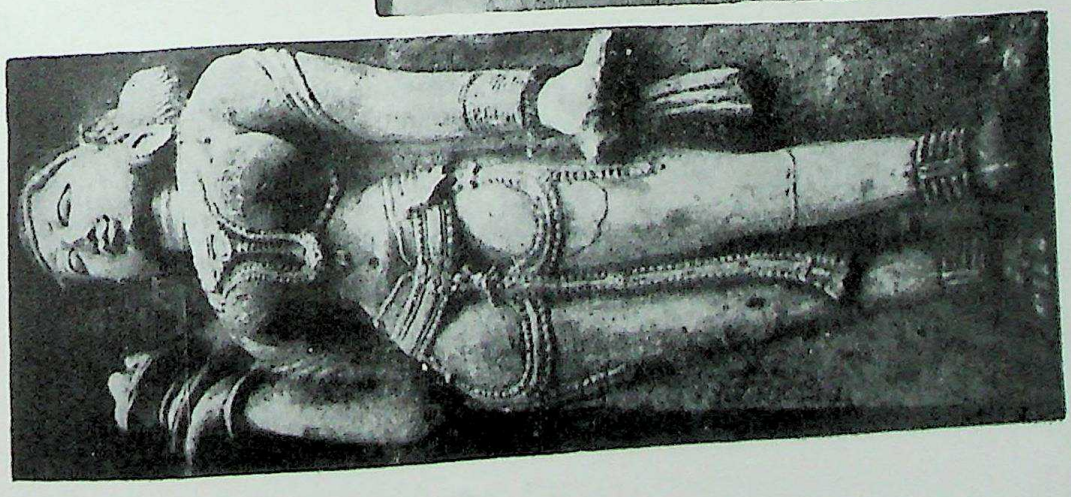

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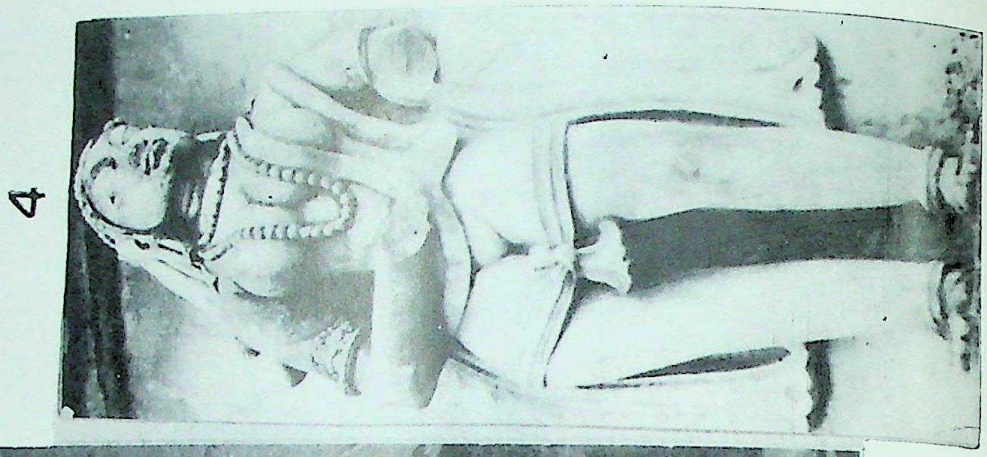

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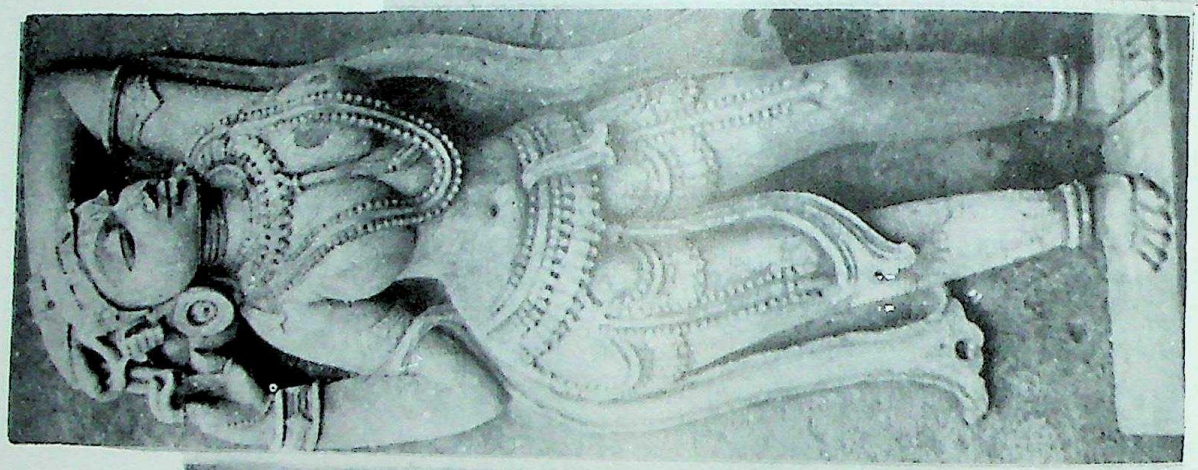

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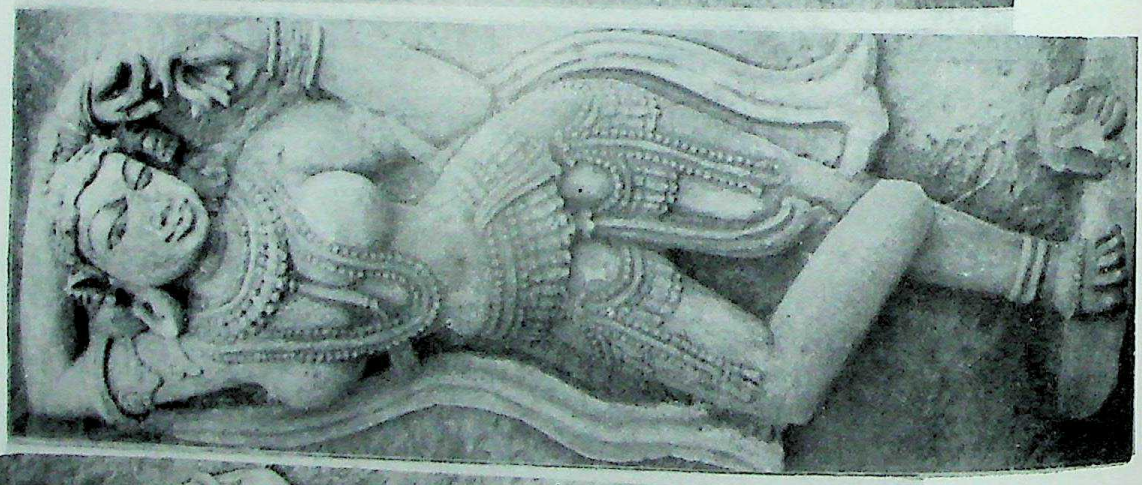

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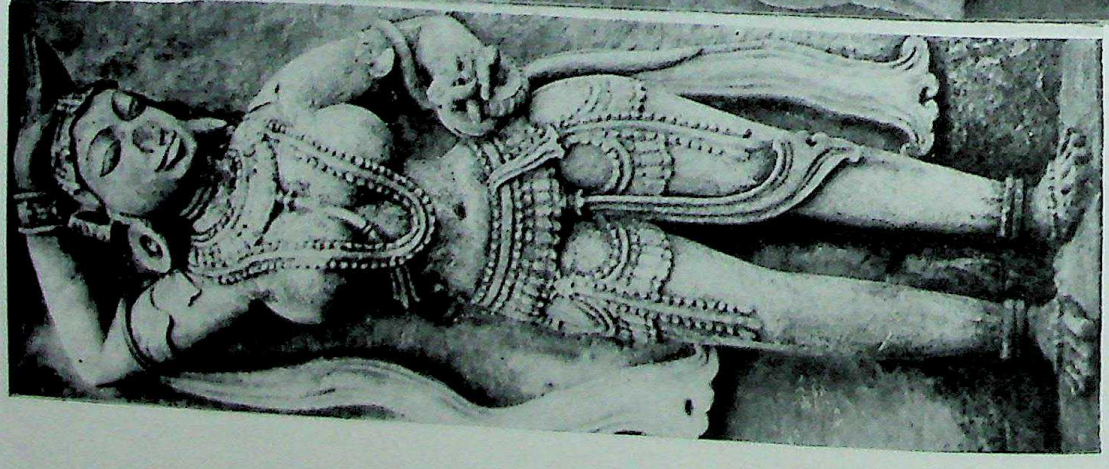

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Pl. XXXII Apsarās, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

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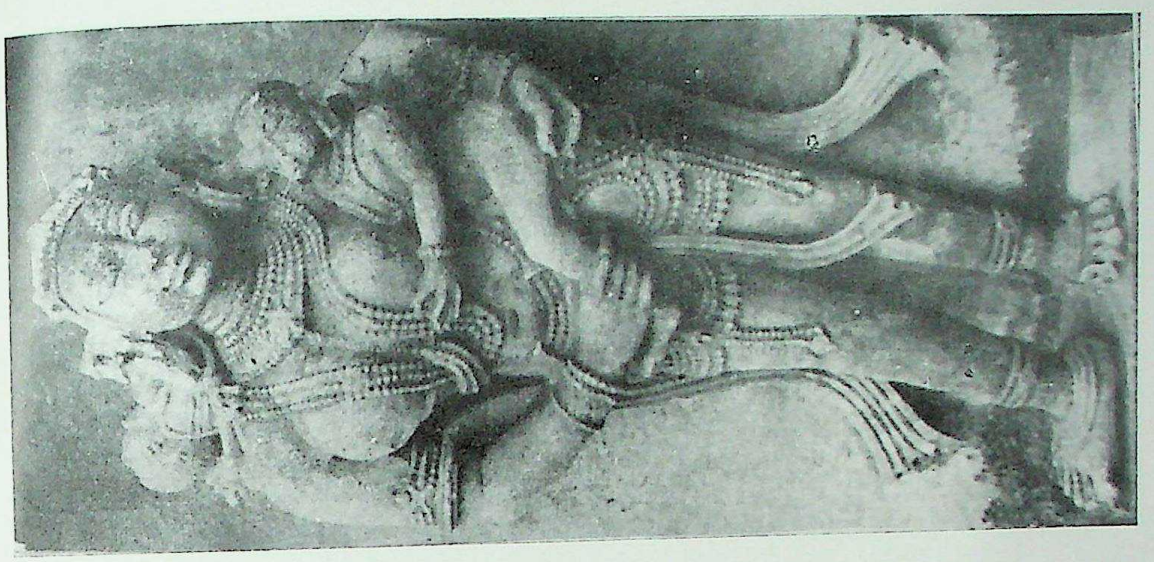
Pl. XXXIII 1 Apsarās, Mārkaṇḍa, Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-1

2 Lady with parrot, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

3 Mother-and-child, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-1

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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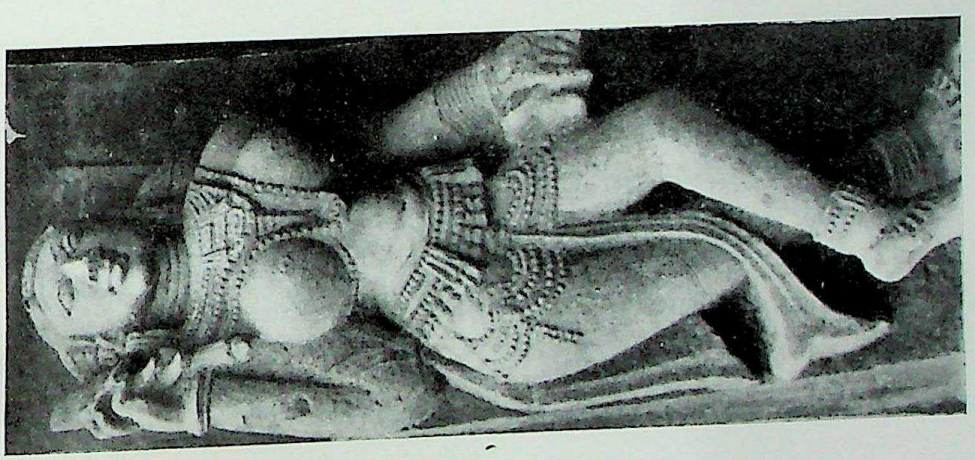

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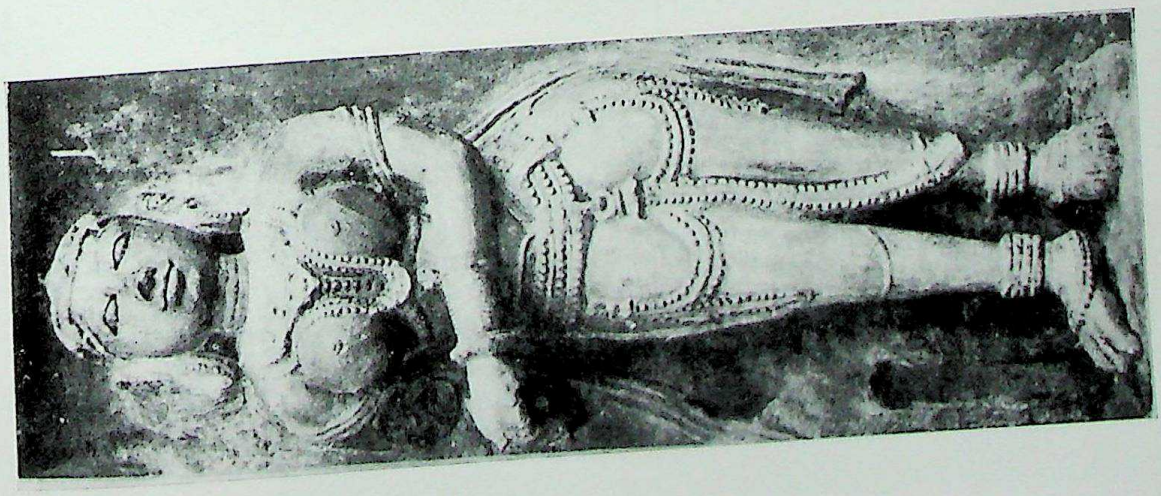

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Pl. XXXIV

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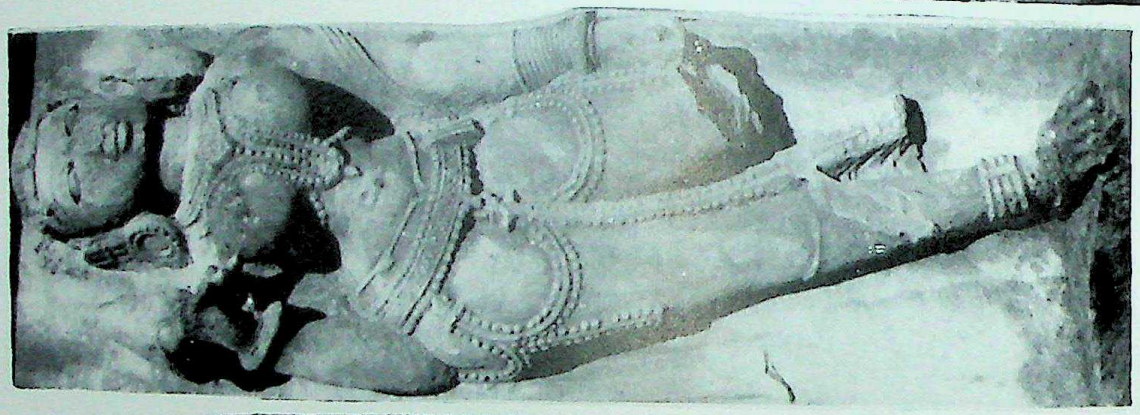

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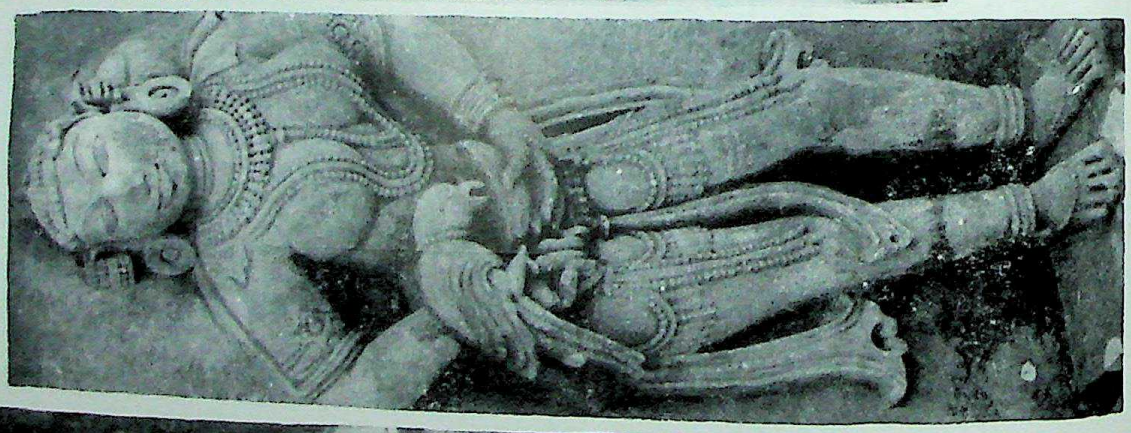

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Pl. XXXIV Ladies with parrot, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple:

1 South Face, Register-2
2 North Face, Register-1
3 West Face, Register-1
4 West Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXXV

1 Lady tying an anklet, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-1

2 Lady with loosened girdle, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-2

3 Lady holding the girdle, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-2

4 Lady holding an anklet, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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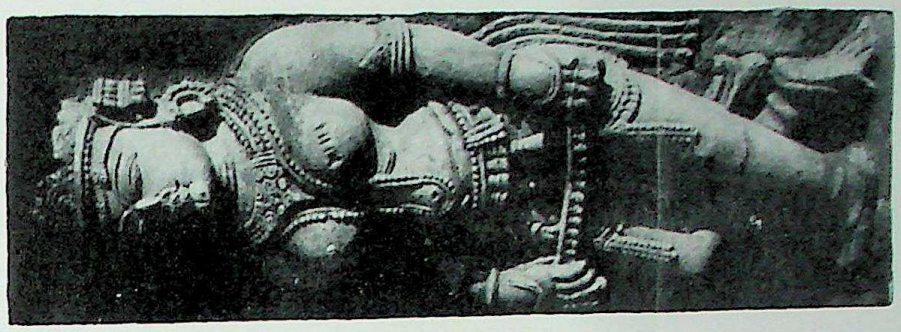

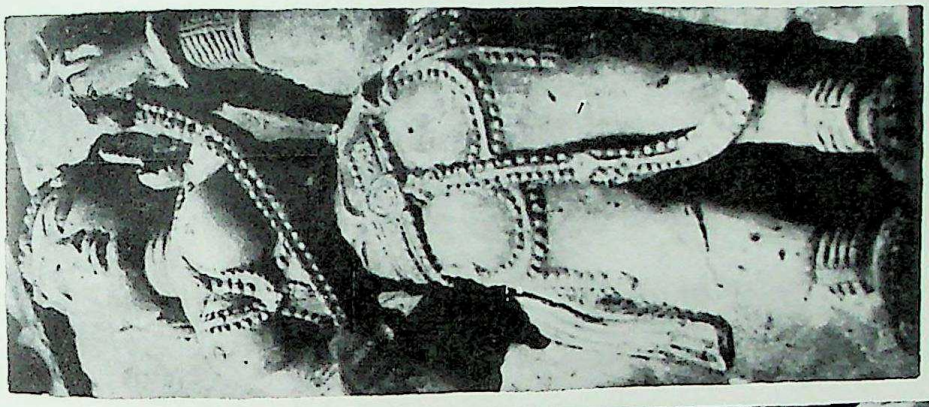

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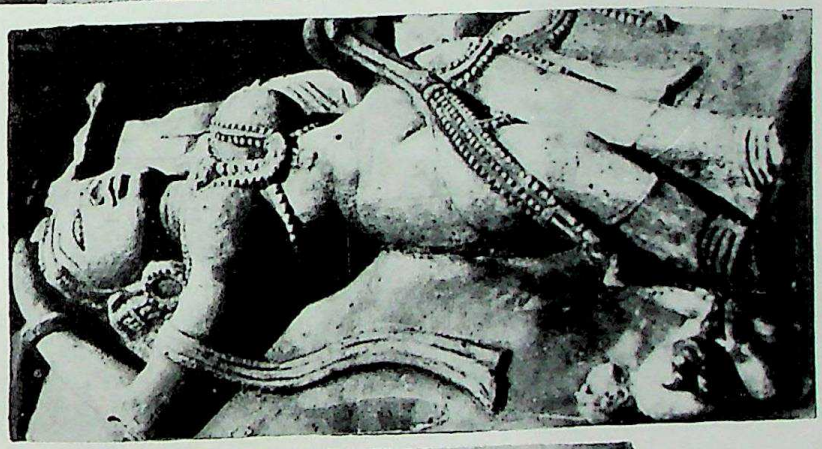

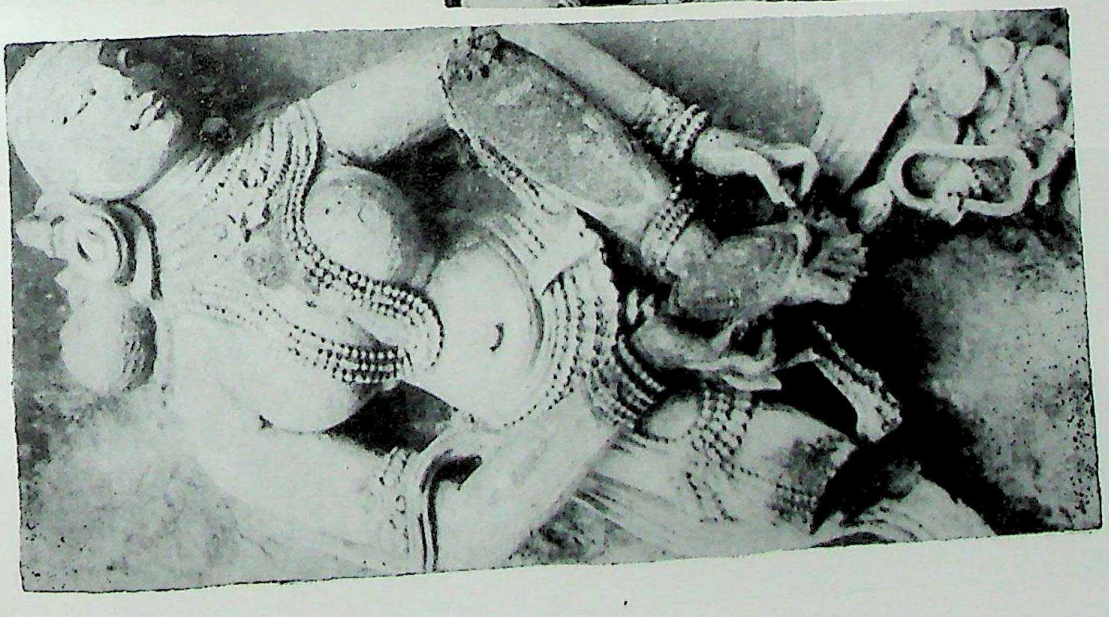

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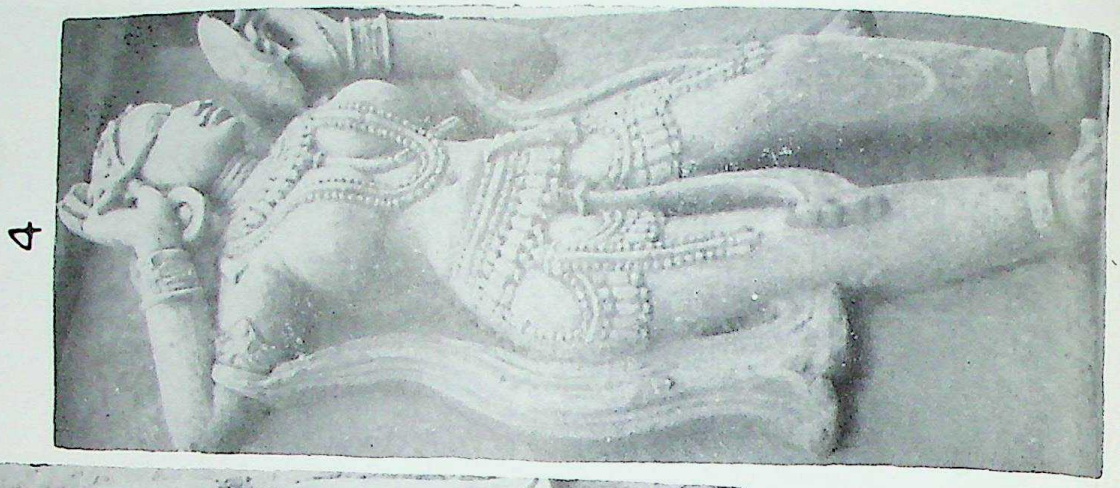

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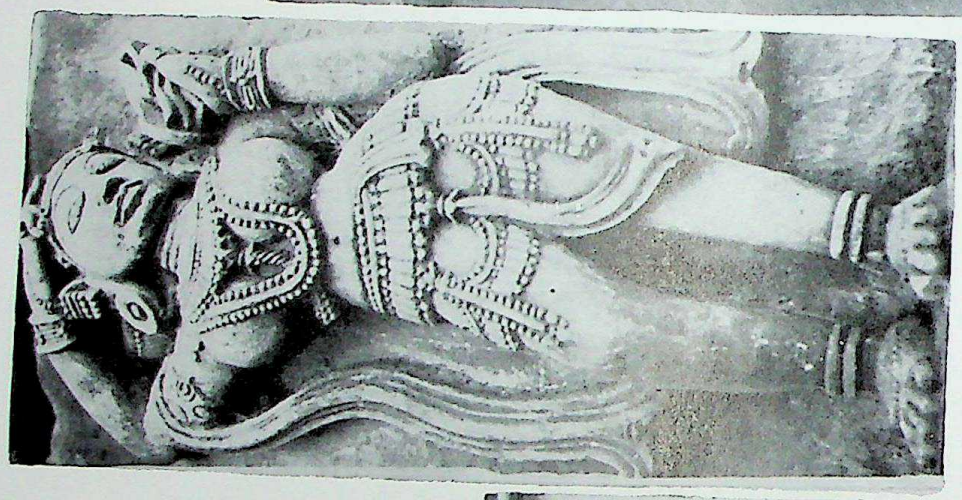

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Pl. XXXVI

1 Lady at toilet, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

2 Lady at toilet, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

3 Lady with mirror, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-2

4 Lady applying collyrium, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

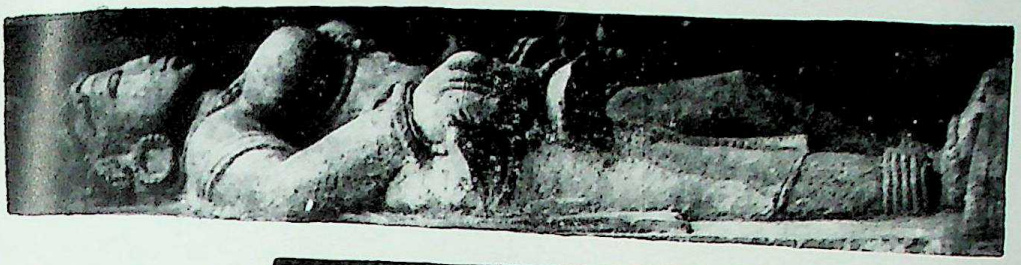
Pl. XXXVII 1 Lady playing on a flute, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-2

2 Lady playing the vīṇā, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

3 Lady with a musical instrument, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-2

4 Lady with cymbals, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-1

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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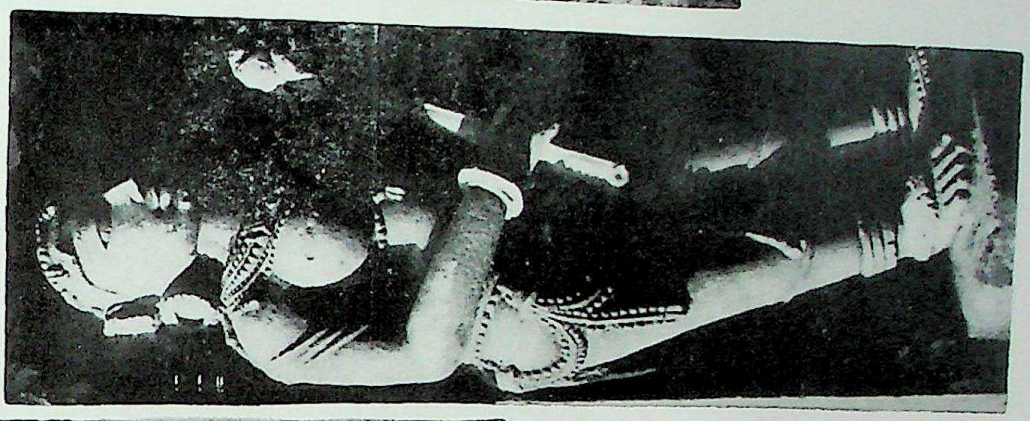

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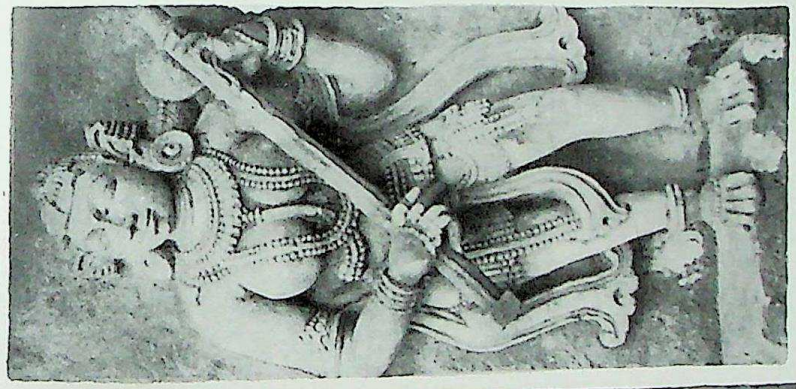

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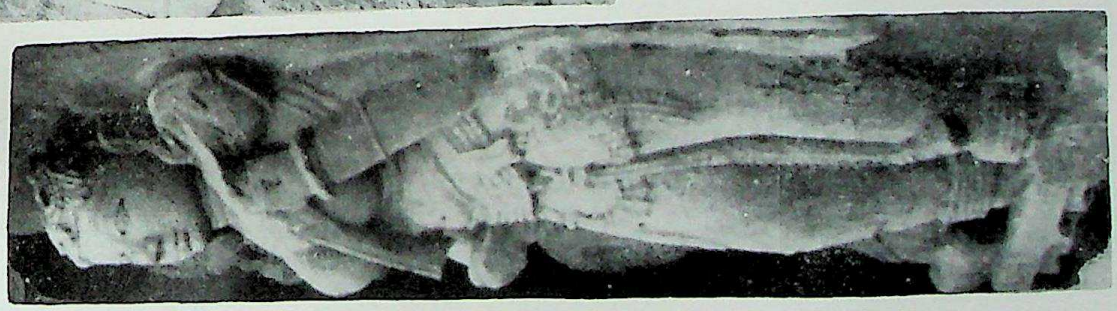

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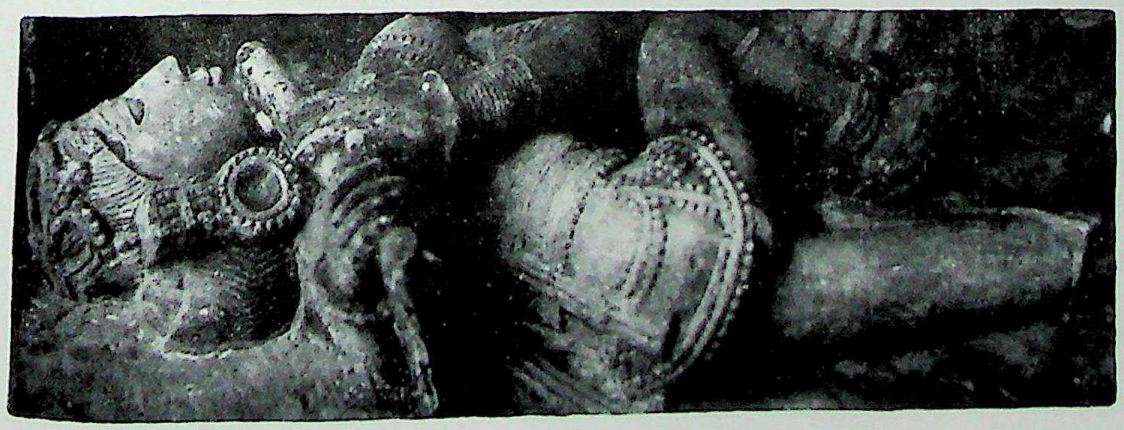

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXXVIII

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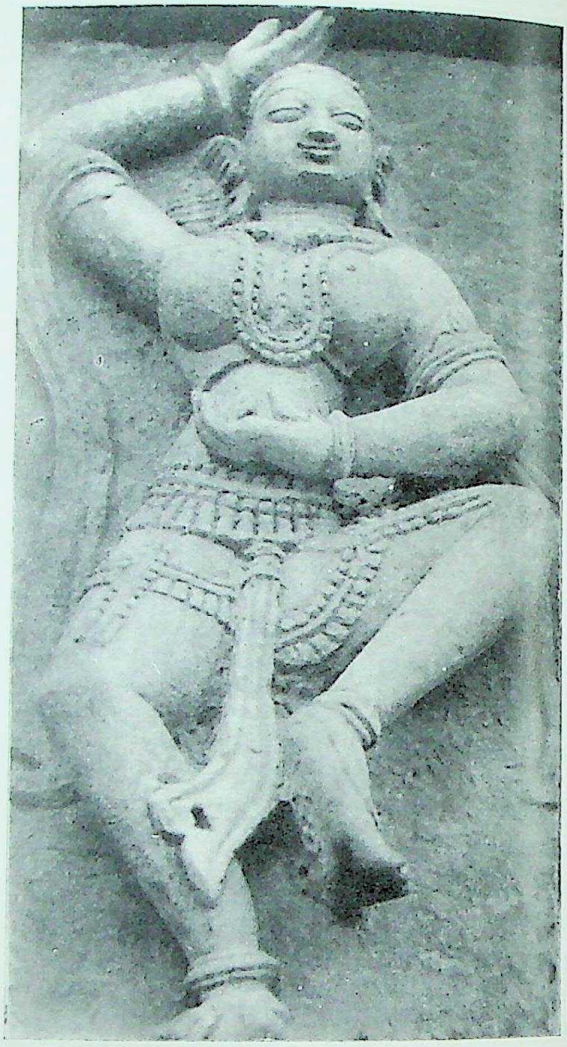

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXXVIII Dancing Damsels, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple:

1 South Face, Register-3
2 East Face, Register-3
3 North Face, Register-1
4 North Face, Register-3
5 North Face, Register-1

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XXXIX

1 A Lady hunter with bow and arrow

1 B Female Dancer

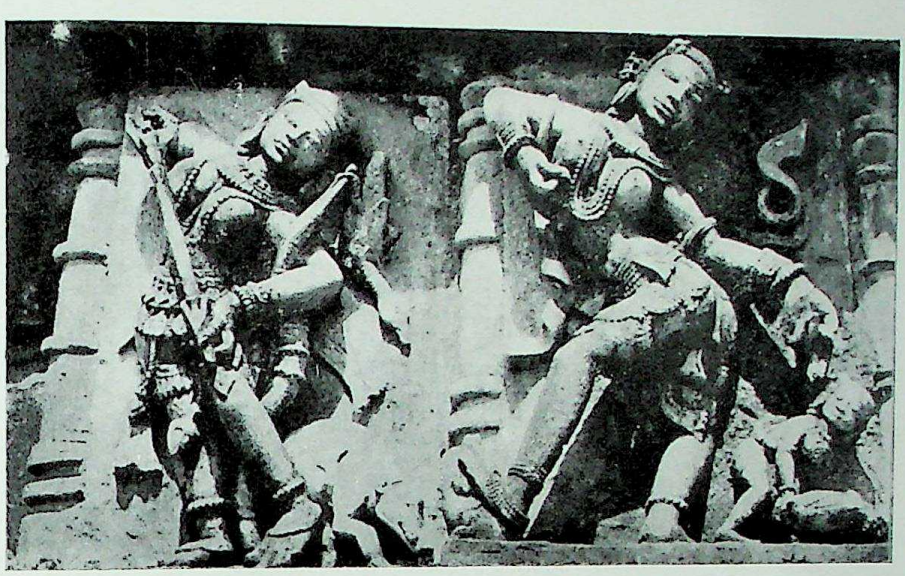
2 Dancing Lady

3 Lady with a bag

4 Mother and child

} Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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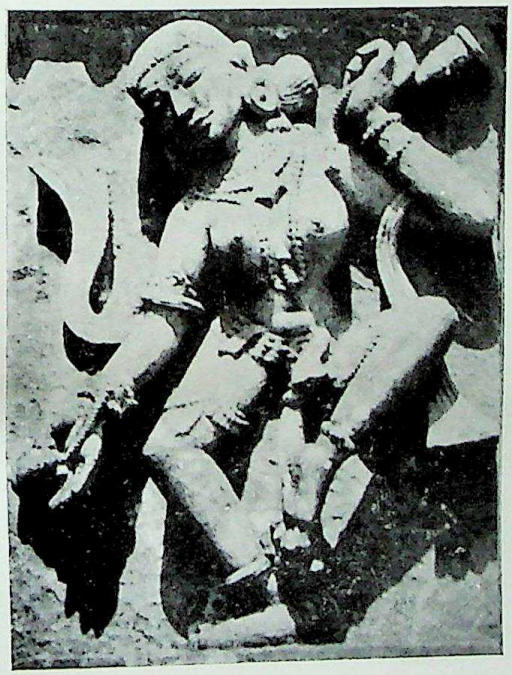

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XL

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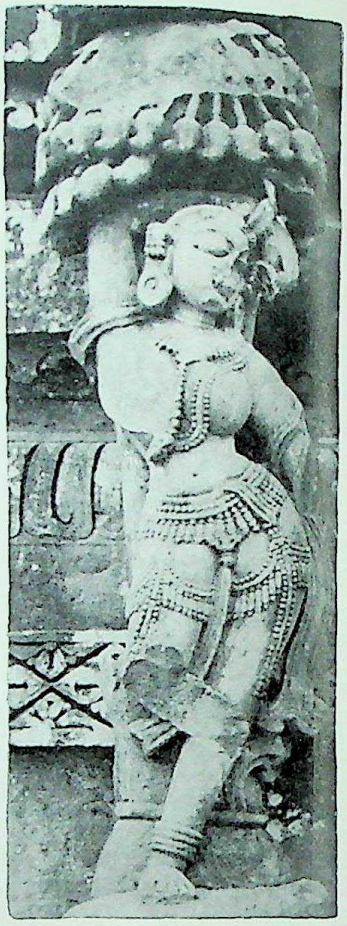

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XL

1, 3, 5 Lady with a bunch of mangoes with monkey nearby

2 Lady with bunch of mangoes

4 Lady under a mango tree, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

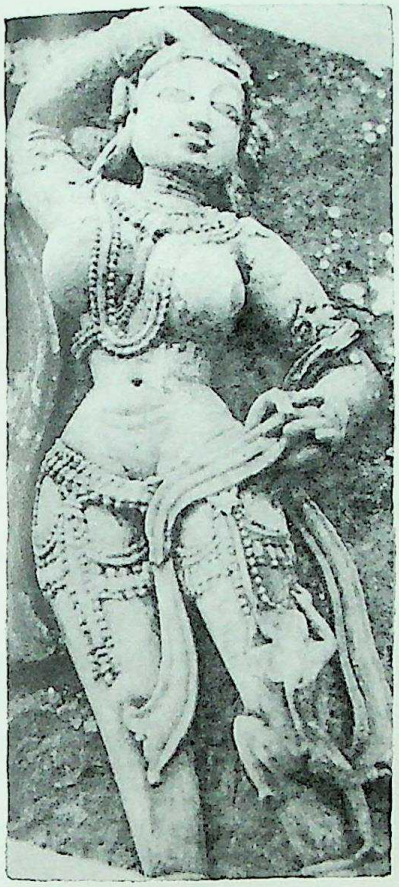
Pl. XLI

1, 2, 3, 4 — Ladies whose garments are being snatched

5 — Lady with a scorpion on her right thigh

[1 East Face, Register-2; 2 South Face, Register-1; 3 North Face, Register-2; 4 North Face, Register-2; 5 South Face, Register-1, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple]

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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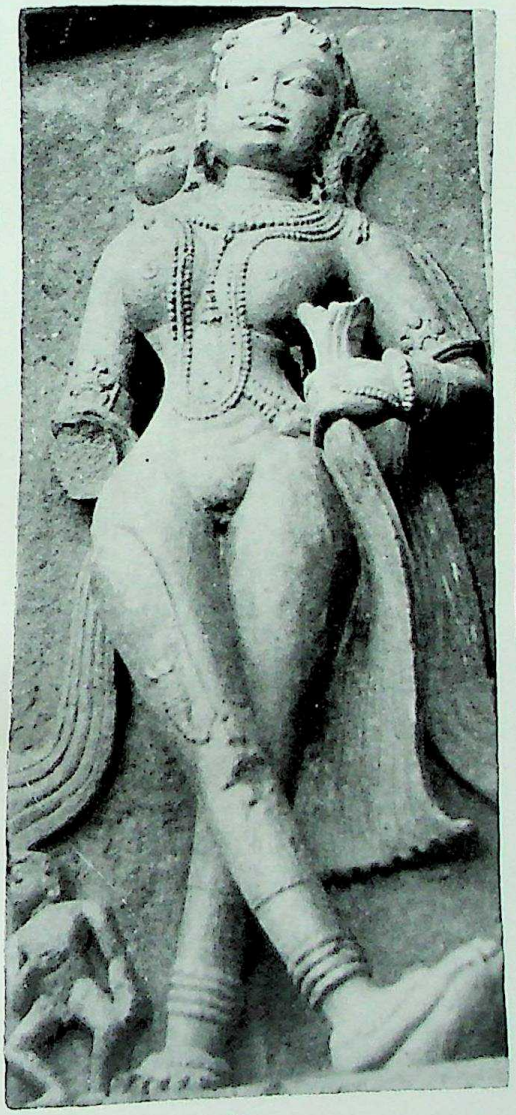

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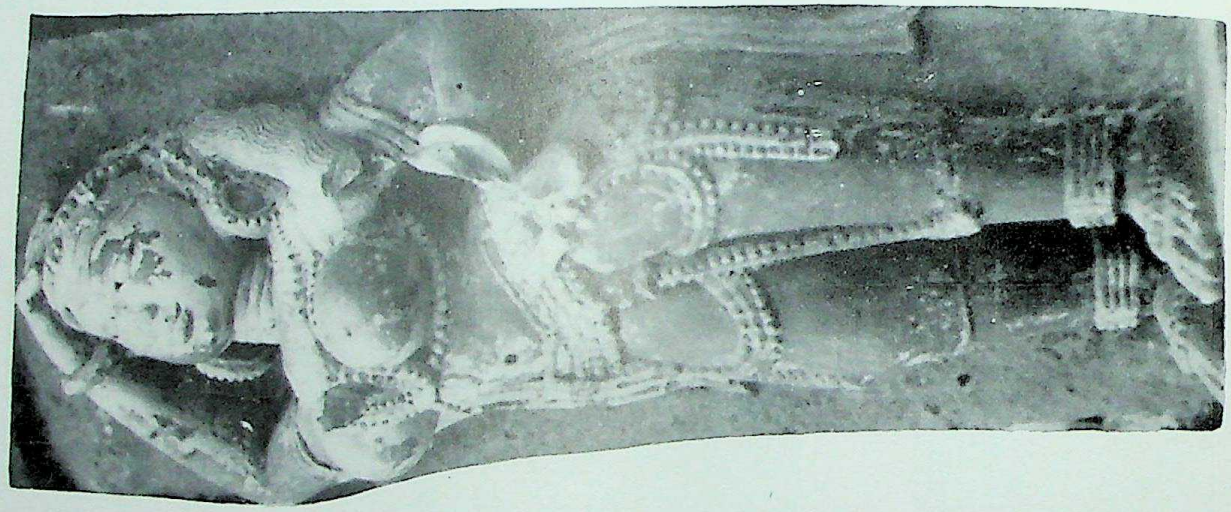
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLII

3



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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

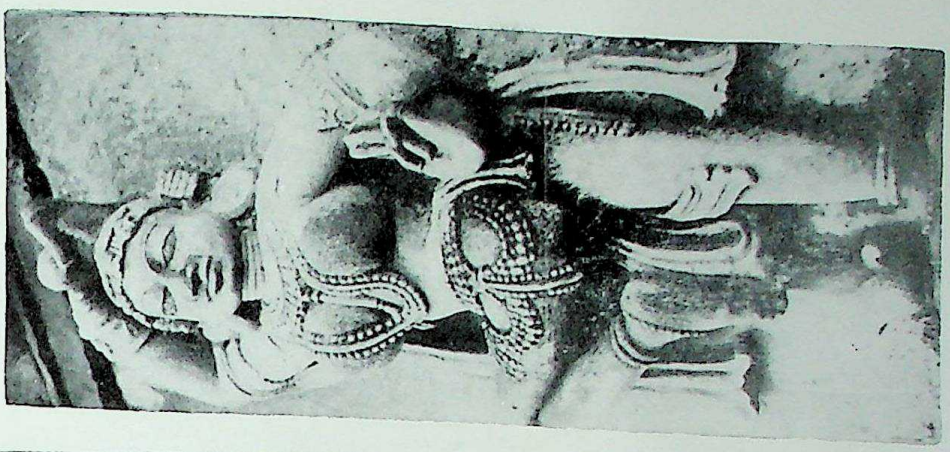
Pl. XLII	1	Dancing Lady, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-3
	2	Lady at hairdo, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2
	3	Dancing Lady, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLIII 1 Dancer, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-2
2 Chowrie-bearer, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-1
3 Chowrie-bearer, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-2
4 Dancer, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

4



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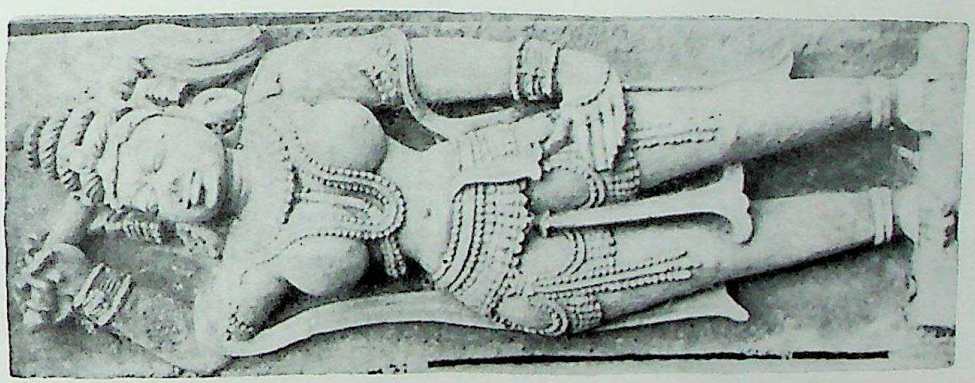

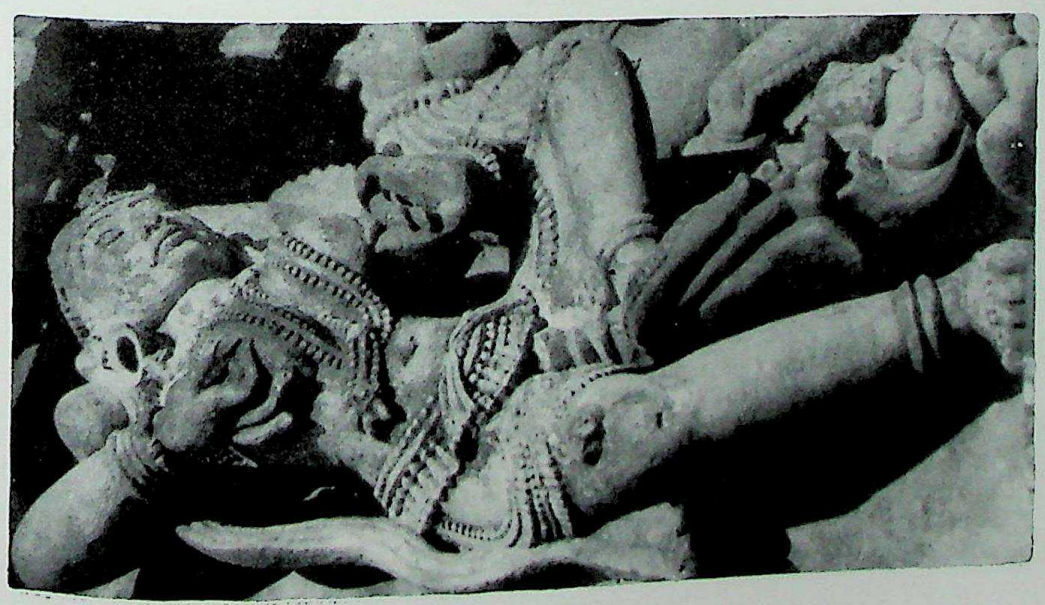

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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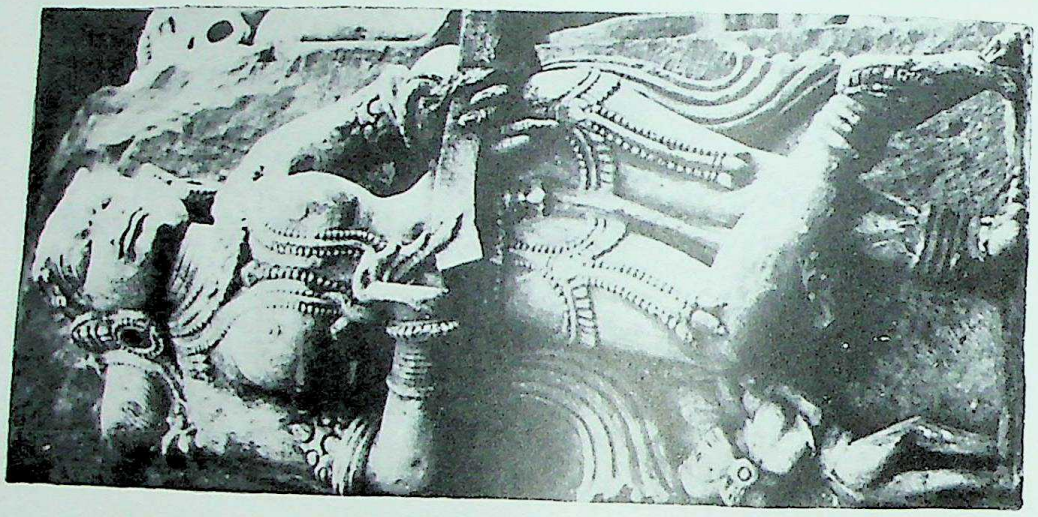

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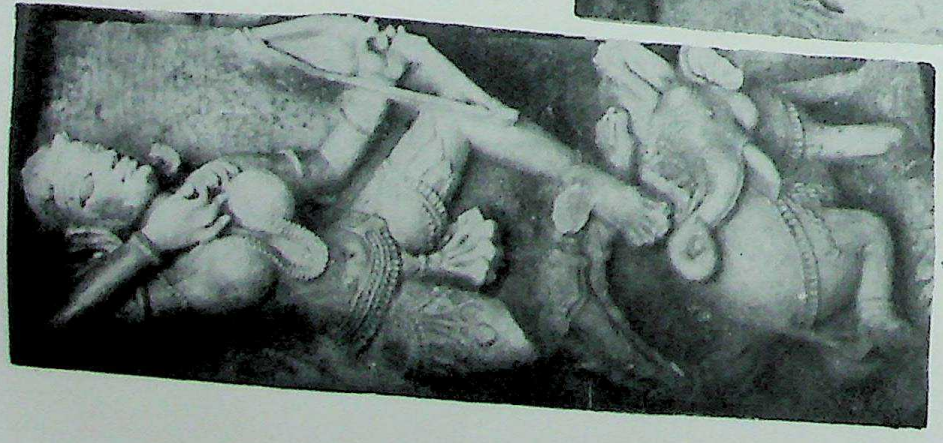

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLIV

1 Huntress, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-1

2 Lady removing a thorn from her leg, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-3

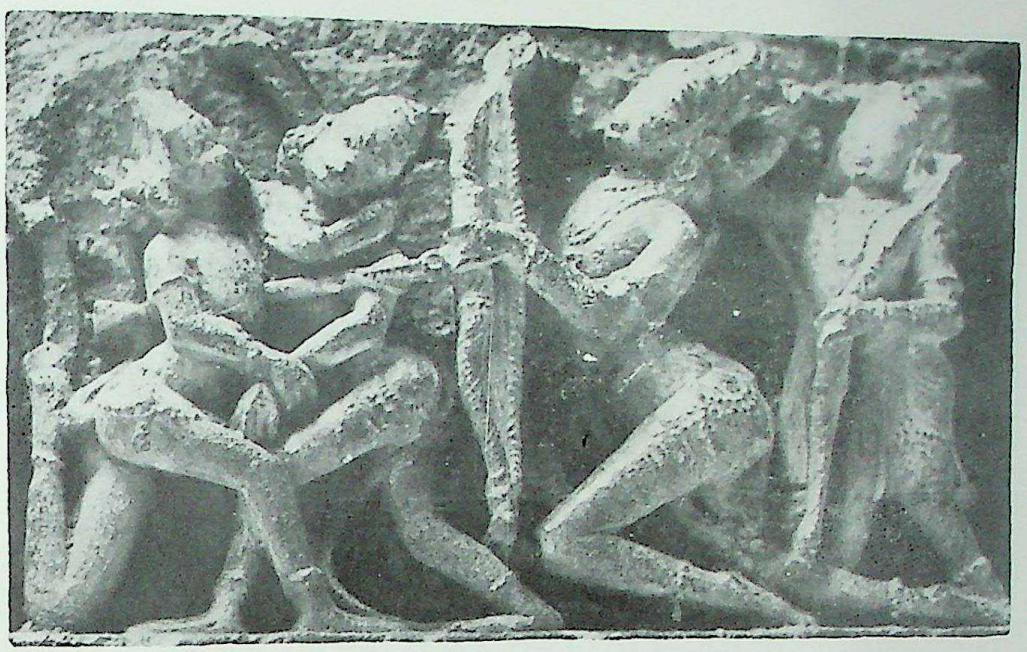
3 Lady writing a letter, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-2

4 Lady playing with ball, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-1

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLV	1	Battle of Vālī and Sugrīva, Rāmāyaṇa Story, Stray sculpture
	2	Killing of Jaṭāyu, Rāmāyaṇa Story, Stray sculpture
	3	Lady tying an anklet, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1
	4	Lady with a bird, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, South Face, Register-2

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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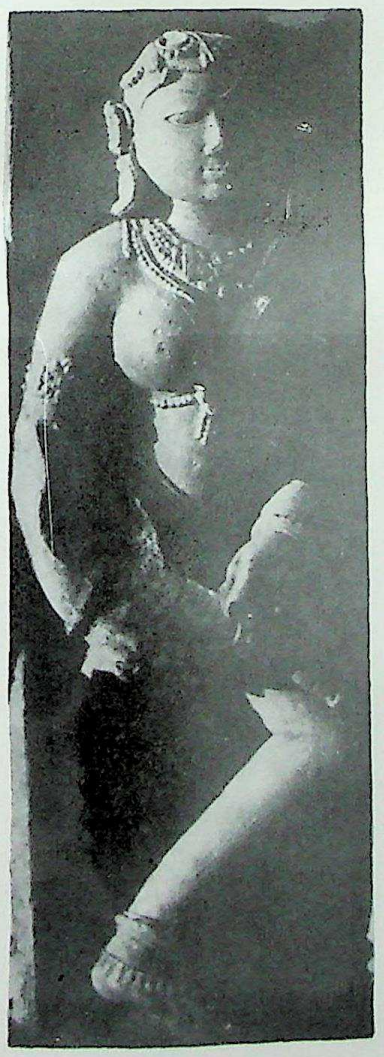

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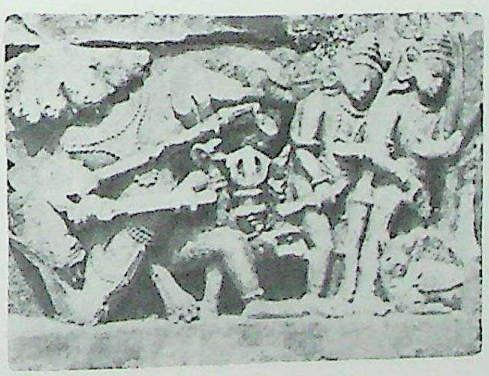

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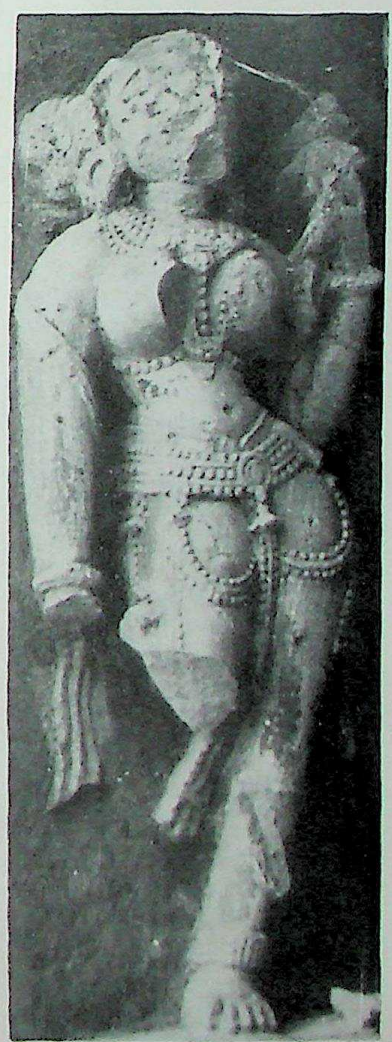

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLVI

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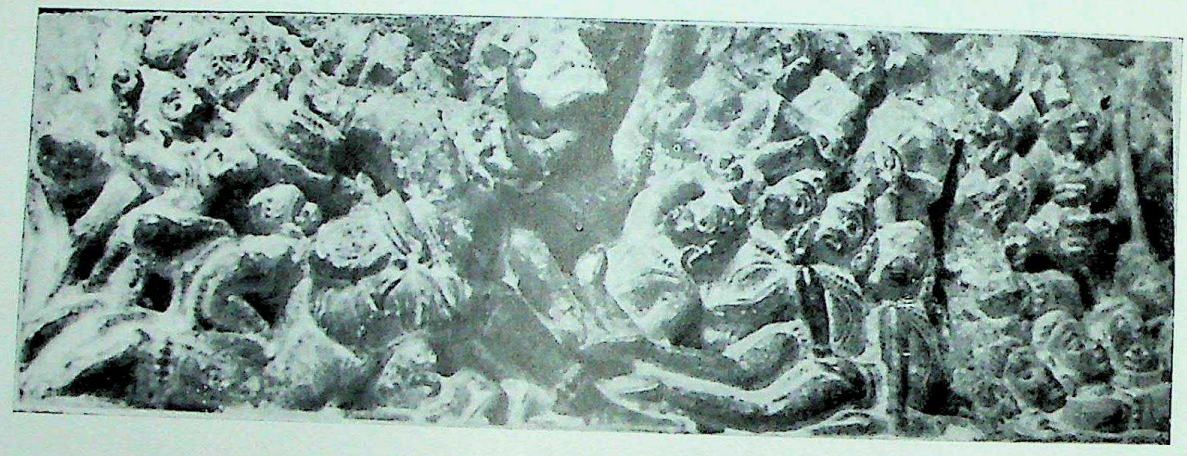

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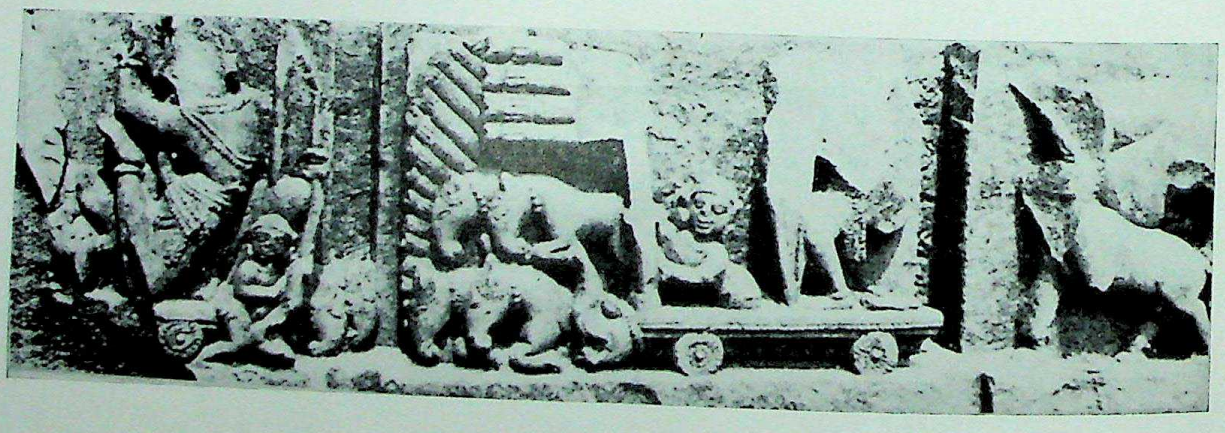

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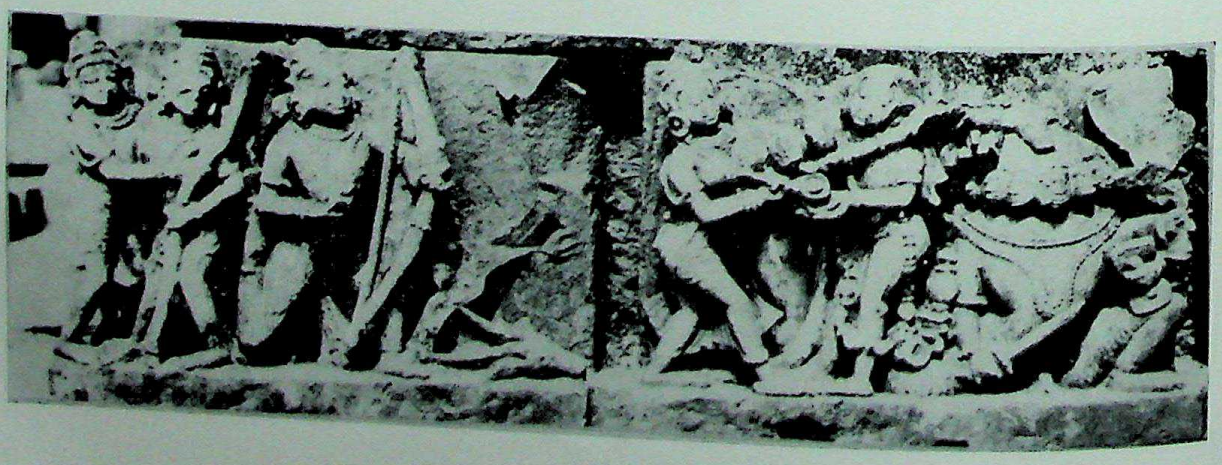

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

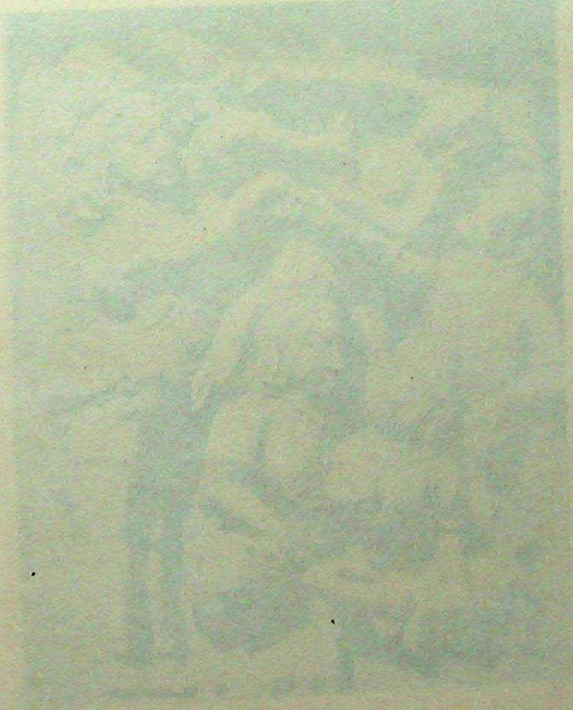
Pl. XLVI

1 (Left) Duryodhana at the lake
(Right) Battle of Bhīma and Duryodhana, Stray sculpture

2 Battle of Rāvaṇa and monkeys, Stray sculpture

3 Battle Scene : Arjuna and Karṇa, Mahābhārata

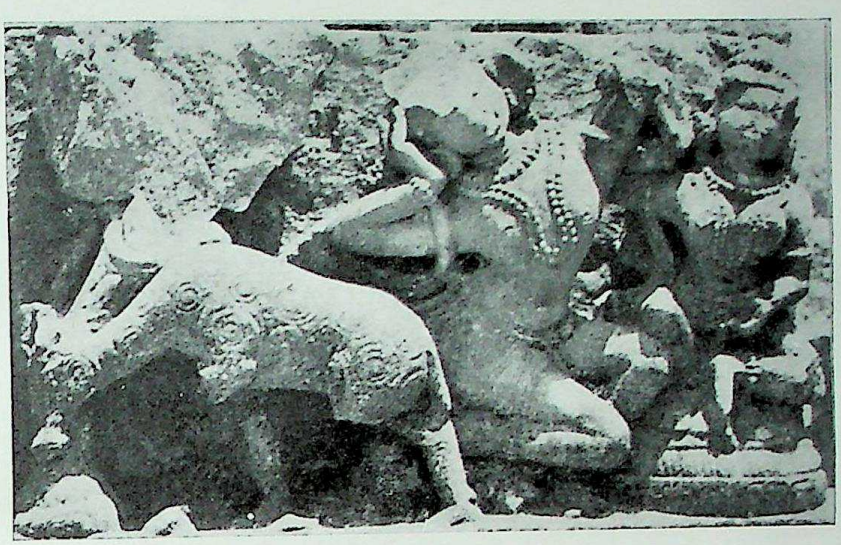
4 (Left) Killing of the golden deer (Rāmāyaṇa)
(Right) Rāvaṇa begging alms with Sītā and kidnapping of Sītā (Rāmāyaṇa)



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLVII 1 Sītā sees the golden deer (Rāmāyaṇa)
2 Coronation of Rāma and Sītā
3 Self immolation

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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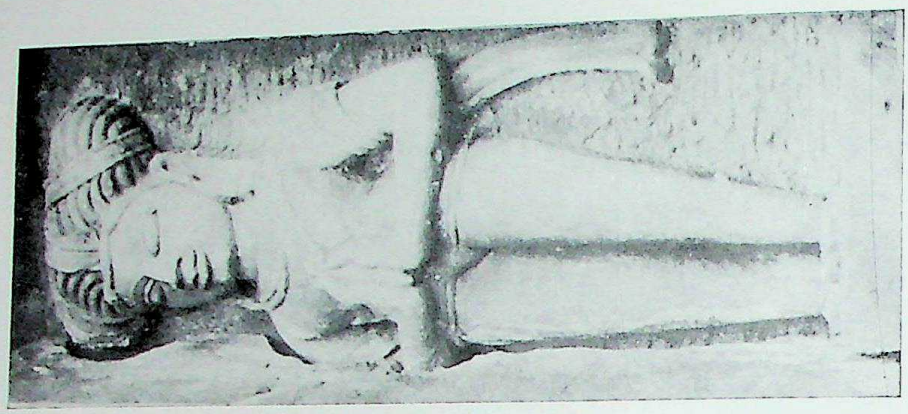
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLVIII



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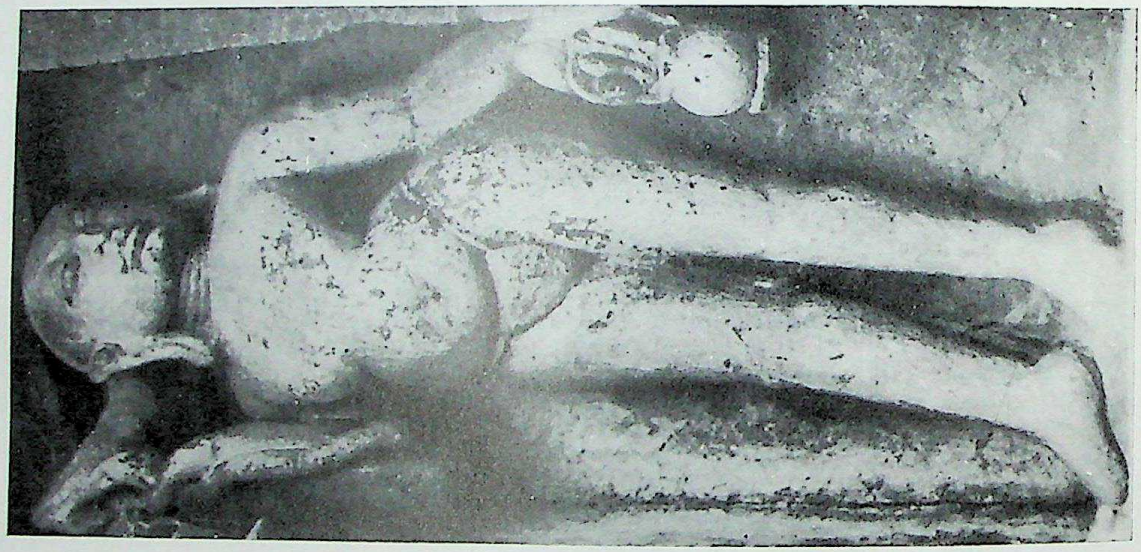

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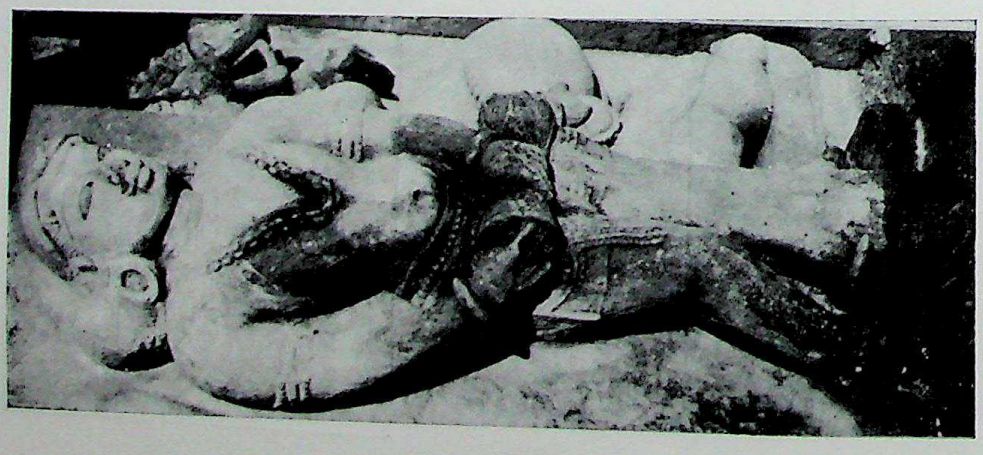

1

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLVIII	1	Musician playing upon the mṛdaṅga, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1
	2	Ascetic, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face, Register-1
	3	A devotee, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, North Face, Register-3

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. XLIX 1 Ram Vyāla, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
2 Goat Vyāla, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
3 Rhino Vyāla, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
4 Ascetic, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face
5 Ten-headed Rāvaṇa with ass-head in the centre, Hanumān Temple

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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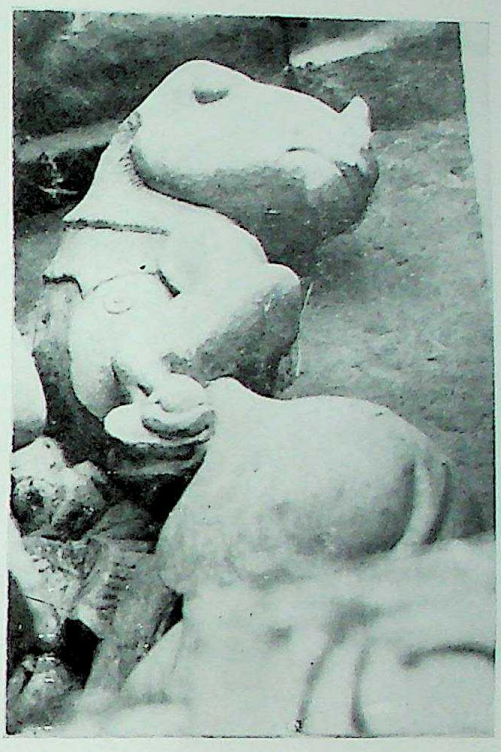

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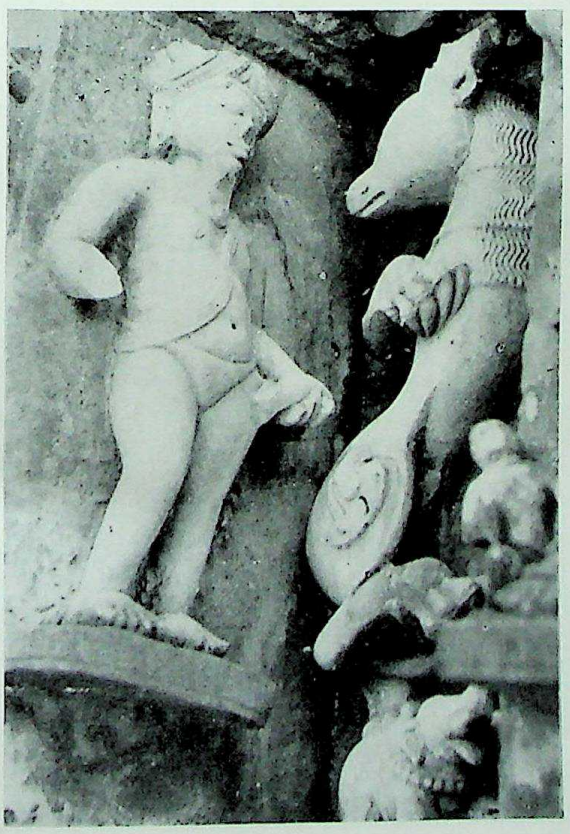

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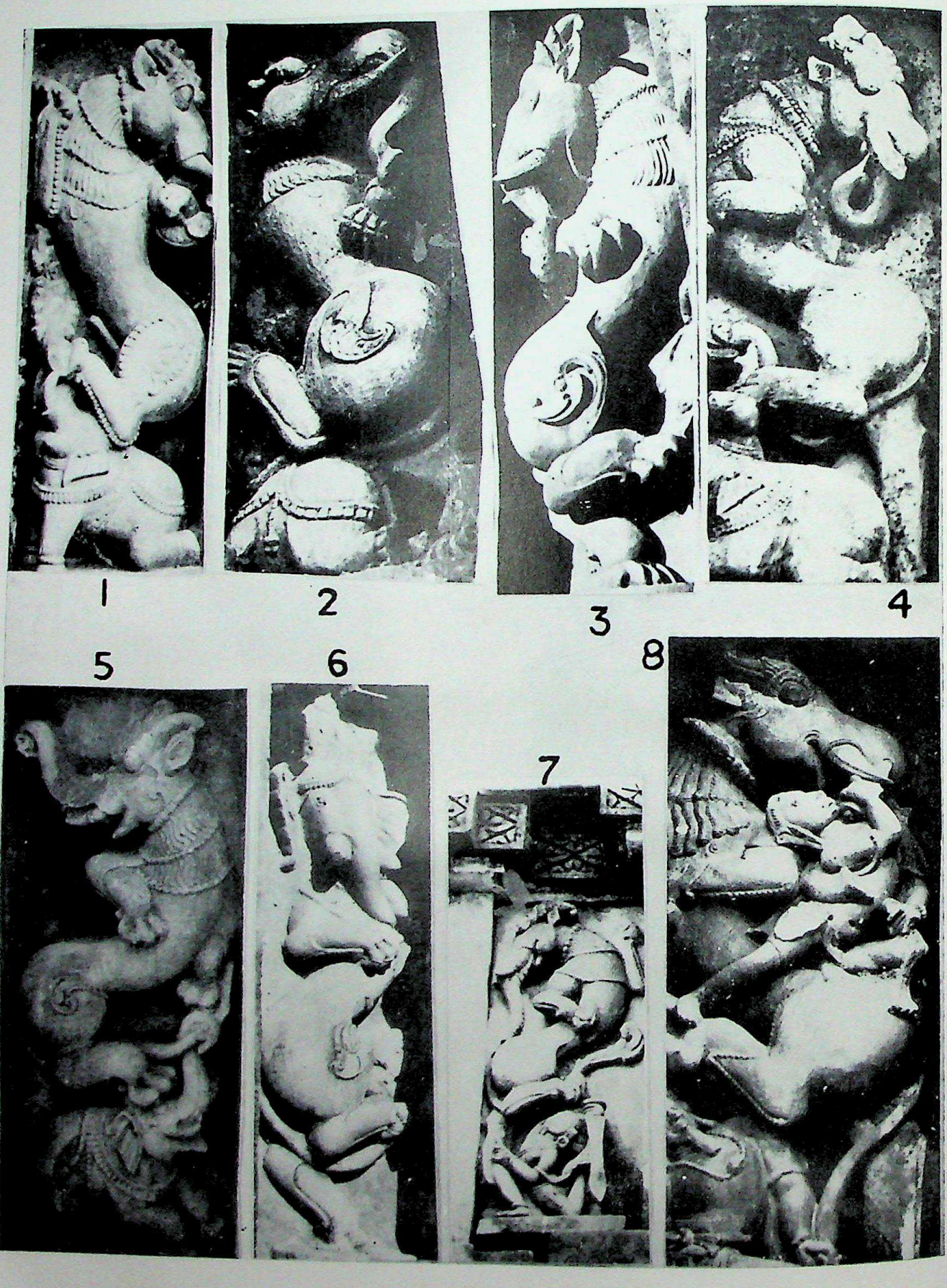
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. L



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. L

1 Elephant Vyāla (North Face)
2 Elephant Vyāla (North)
3 Elephant Vyāla (West)
4 Elephant Vyāla (West)
5 Elephant Vyāla (North)
6 Gaṇeśa Vyāla (West)
7 Elephant Vyāla (North)
8 Elephant Vyāla (North)

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

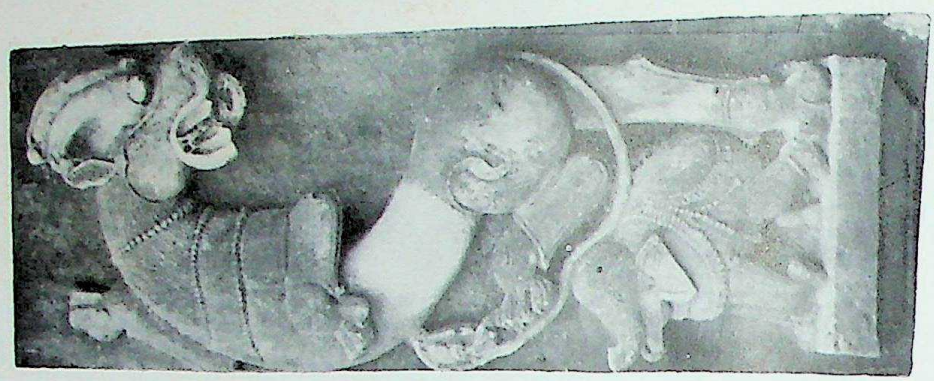
Pl. LI

Vyālas, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
[1 Goat Vyāla (South); 2 Cat Vyāla (South); 3 Horse Vyāla (South),
4 Lion Vyāla (North); 5 Man Vyāla (West); 6 Lion Vyāla (South);
7 Parrot Vyāla (South); 8 Ram Vyāla (East)]

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

PI. LII



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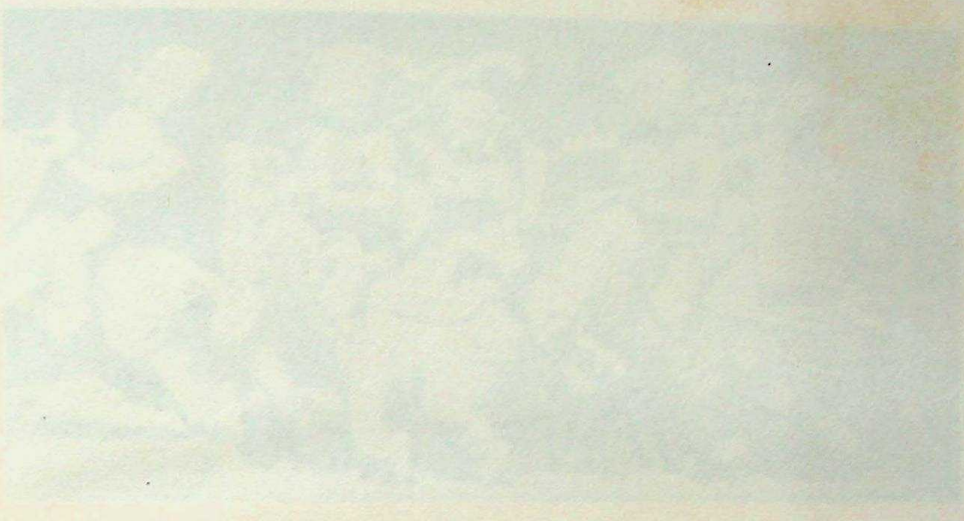
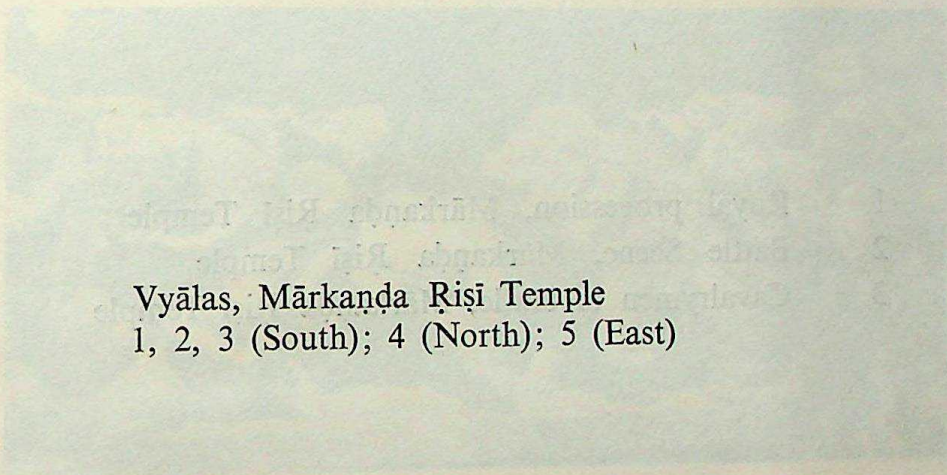
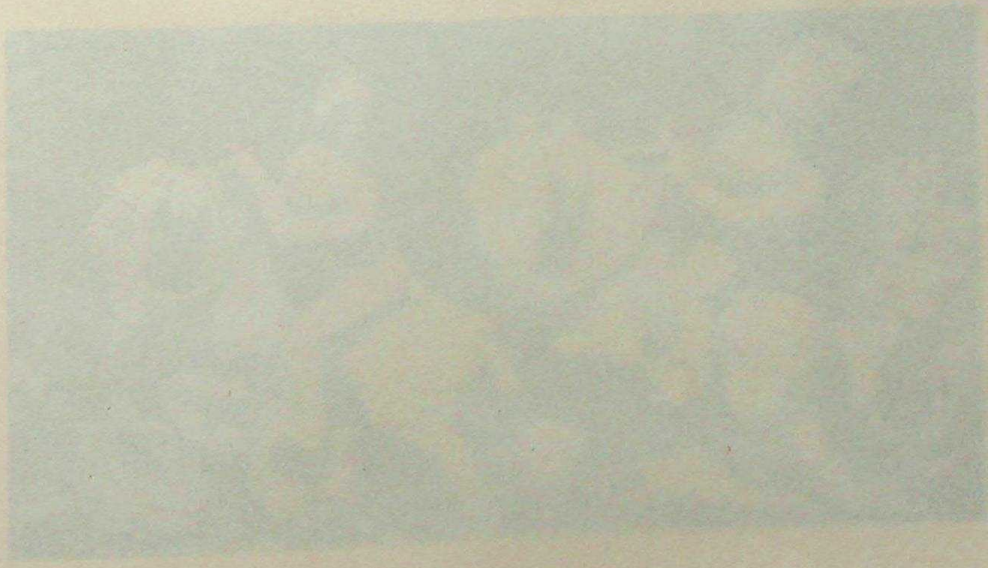
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh





Pl. LII Vyālas, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
1, 2, 3 (South); 4 (North); 5 (East)



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. LIII

1 Royal procession, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
2 Battle Scene, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
3 Cavalrymen in battle, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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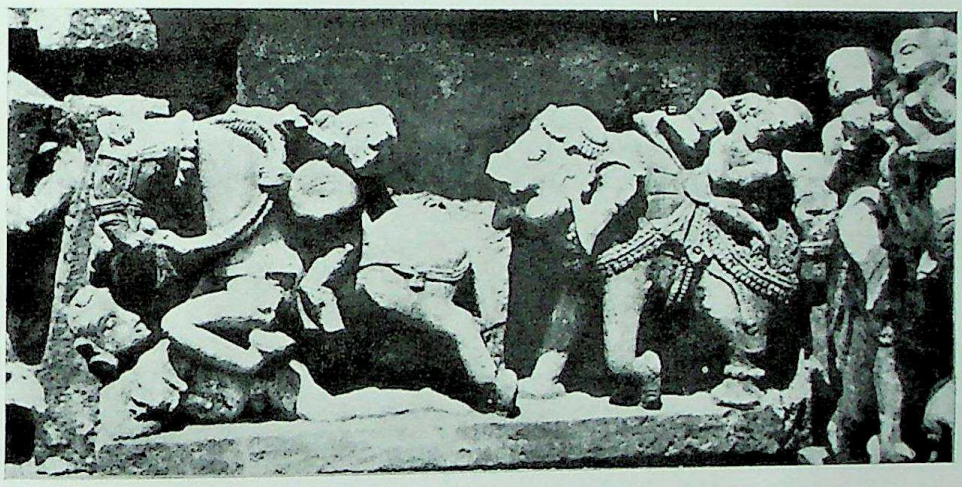

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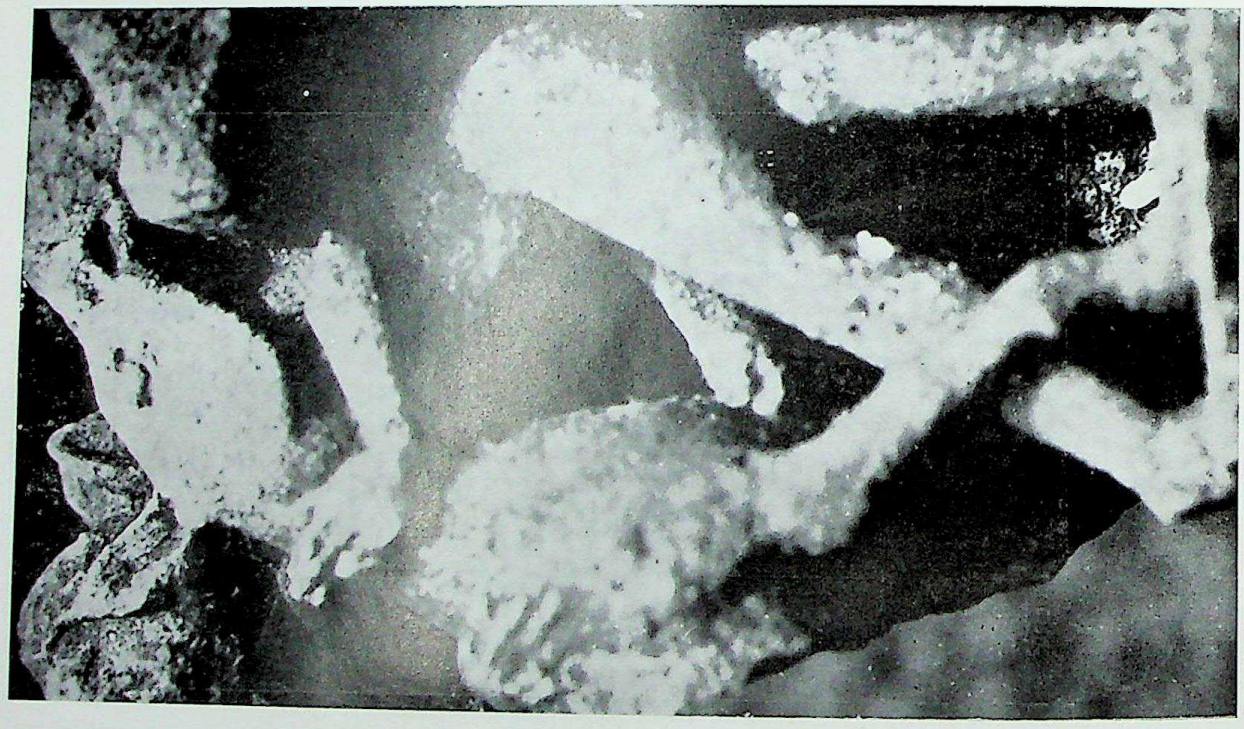
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. LIV

3



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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. LIV

1 Amorous Couple, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, Register-3

2 Man and she-ass, Stray sculpture

3 Nude woman, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, East Face, Register-3

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. LV 1 Call to battle, Stray sculpture, Daśāvatāra Temple
2 Erotic sculpture, Stray sculpture
3 Inscription (Stray)

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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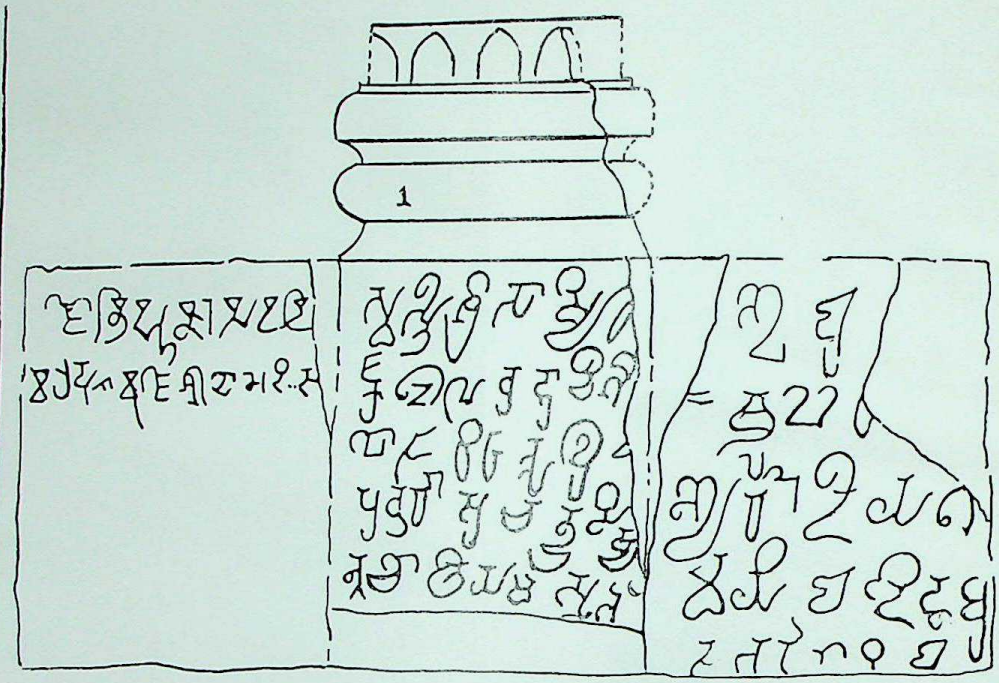
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. LVI Inscriptions from Mārkaṇḍi Temples (After CUNNINGHAM, *ASI*, Vol. IX, Pl. XXX)

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Pl. LVII	1	Inscription, Stray Stone, Behind Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
	2, 5, 6	Inscriptions, Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple, West Face
	3	Inscription, Stray Stone, Behind Mārkaṇḍa Ṛiṣī Temple
	4	Inscription, Stray Stone

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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